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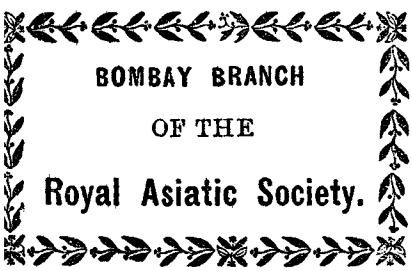

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JOURNAL

OF A

RESIDENCE IN CIRCASSIA.

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H. Warren, lith. from a Sketch by Lt. Stanislaus Bell, 84th. Regt. Published 15th Feb. 1836 by the Queen.

HADJI GHEZIL BEG.
(The Lion of Circassia.)

JOURNAL

OF A

RESIDENCE IN CIRCASSIA

DURING THE YEARS 1837, 1838 AND 1839.

BY

JAMES STANISLAUS BELL.

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a1

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

65 45

"Non si debbe mai lasciar seguire un disordine per fuggire una guerra, perchè ella non si fugge, ma si differisce a tuo disavvantaggio."—IL PRINCIPE.

LONDON:
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MDCCCXL.

1840

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PREFACE.

THOSE of my readers who happen to have heard of the "Affair of the Vixen," will be already aware that my first visit to Circassia was induced by mercantile objects—the establishment of trade with the natives.

On my second visit to that country I had the same objects in view, in consequence of the expectation then generally prevalent, that our Government would have enforced reparation for the seizure of the Vixen, thereby affording an opening for trade; but the expedition was undertaken at the desire (as I was led to suppose) of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, intimated by the Under-Secretary, Mr. Strangways, to Mr. Urquhart, then Secretary of Legation at Constantinople, who communicated it to and made arrangements with me.

The inducement for my remaining in Circassia—after I had ceased, from unexpected change in the councils at home, to have much hope that the poli-

tical information I was acquiring would be made available to my country—was the expectation which I entertained, and was encouraged in, from time to time, by the letters received from my countrymen, of succeeding in the accomplishment of my original object — the establishment of a direct trade between Circassia and Great Britain. These subjects are adverted to in the course of the Journal; but it cannot fail to be observed that, from first to last, expectations were held out to me which, from various causes still open for discussion, were not realised.

My own private matters necessarily left much of my time unoccupied; and in a country so little known, and yet so singularly interesting, as Circassia is in many respects, I felt that I could not spend the leisure time on my hands with more pleasure to myself, and perchance profit to my country, than in gaining such a thorough acquaintance, as opportunity would afford, with the habits, manners, and general character of the natives, and of their political and civil institutions.

My information upon these subjects I have given the reader just as it was acquired, without attempting to reduce it into method or arrangement. Circassia is a country wholly devoid of any literature

whatever; the knowledge I have to communicate has therefore had ocular and auricular observation for its principal source, and has necessarily been acquired in a very desultory and unconnected manner. To have reduced this information into form and connexion, might have led me to interweave with actual facts my own theoretical conclusions from them; for notwithstanding the length of my residence in the country, and the intimate and familiar footing I enjoyed with the natives, I by no means feel assured that in attempting to give a connected or systematic account of the people, and of the social institutions of the country, I should not have presented to the reader something less true, and certainly less graphic, though perhaps more symmetrical, than the Journal of every day's observation and experience, which I now lay before him just as it was compiled for the purpose of private correspondence.

While prosecuting these inquiries, it would have required a more phlegmatic temperament than I can boast of to have refrained from taking,—in like manner as two of my countrymen who were with me for some time took,—not an interest merely, but a warm and enthusiastic interest, in arresting the progress of the cruel and unprincipled warfare which Russia

has been carrying on, for the last twelve years especially, in this interesting country.

When we viewed the desolation of whole districts—the crops burned and the hamlets destroyed—and continually heard the account of families, once happy and prosperous, reduced to indigence and misery by the destruction of their young men—and when we reflected that all this disturbance of the peace of a country every way fitted for the enjoyment of its inhabitants, was occasioned solely by the ambition and insatiable thirst for dominion of one individual, the Emperor of Russia, we could not restrain our indignation; we therefore freely took part in the councils of the natives, and gave them the benefit of such knowledge as our experience and reading had afforded us, in counselling them as to the particular species of warfare which seemed best suited for the troops they could bring into the field, and most likely to defeat the tactics of their enemies; and I believe we may not unreasonably take partial credit to this advice for the heroic achievements which had begun before I quitted the country, and have since been so admirably accomplished in the capture of almost all of the forts which Russia had erected in the country.

I trust I do not require to make any apology for

this interference in the military affairs of another country, so foreign certainly to the pursuits of a British merchant. However inconvenient it may be for the Government of Great Britain at the present moment to bring to solution the question, whether Russia has any claim whatever over the territory of Circassia, there cannot be a doubt that such a claim has no existence, in right or in fact, and that the independence of that country, not only as a fertile source of commerce, but as a check upon Russia's movements, is of vital importance to Great Britain.

These considerations alone would have been sufficient inducement to give such insignificant aid as was within my power to defeat, or at least retard, the aggressions of Russia, independently altogether of my sympathy for the inhabitants, for whom I had insensibly contracted an affection, as well as enthusiastic admiration.

Before introducing the reader to my Journal, I wish to premise a few observations in regard to the history of the tribes of the Caucasus.

More than one writer has expressed, in a confident tone, his own notions upon this subject. I trust it will not be esteemed presumption on my part (for presumption consists, not in refusing

a blind confidence to the statements of any man, however distinguished, but in an over-estimate of one's own knowledge and abilities, and an under-estimate of those of others), should I, after much consideration, give it as my opinion that the necessary preliminary inquiries are yet to make in regard to the history of this singular and interesting people.

That considerable materials for a history of the Caucasian tribes in general do exist in the literatures of Greece and Rome, of the Turks and Arabs, I firmly believe; but I doubt whether these sources have yet been exhaustively investigated, or their value as evidence critically examined.

The most cursory view, however, of the past and present history of the Caucasian Isthmus leads to the conclusion that the mass of the Caucasian tribes, in comparison with those of the tribes by which they are surrounded, is what may be called aboriginal or indigenous. Their languages differ materially from those of the Indo-Germanic, Semitic, Mongol, and Slavonic nations, by whom their frontiers have been successively encroached upon. The state of society (at least in the parts which I have visited) seems to indicate a people independently engaged in the process of developing home-born laws and institutions, which

have contracted a slight colouring at times from the reflected light of more advanced neighbours. And turning to those great tides of national conquest, which alone history in early times attempted to portray—

> Fins, Teutons, Mongols, Kalmuks, Huns,
> The North's fair and the South's dusk sons,
> Roll'd to the westward from afar
> In tide-waves of ensanguined war—

they seem all to have swept past the central mass of the Caucasus, wetting it at most in a transient manner, by some chance billow which rose higher than its fellows.

The northern limits of Persian and Assyrian conquest are pre-eminently vague, but they do not appear to have done more at the utmost than to have reached the Caucasus. The legislation of the Byzantine empire sufficiently attests that neither Greeks nor Romans conquered or dislodged the tribes of the central Caucasus. The Arabs were engaged in inroads on the eastern and southern bases of this great mountain-range, when their progress was arrested by the growing ascendancy of the Turks. The great Turkish immigration swept past the base of the Caucasus on the south; that of the Tatars or Mongols on the north. The substitution of a Slavonic rival of Turkish ascendancy for a Tatar or

Mongol rival has not yet altered this state of affairs. The struggles of the domesticated nations have been confined to the plains; the mountain-range is still occupied by the aboriginal tribes.

Some scanty traces of antiquity which I have noted, seem to point out the portions of the Byzantine, Arabian, Turkish, Mongolian, and Slavonic records, in which notices of the Caucasian tribes may be sought, with the greatest probability of success. Some interesting particulars might be discovered in the records of the Republic of Genoa, and perhaps also in the annals of the Kingdom of Georgia. The subject is worthy of being followed up (by some one better fitted to the task than I can pretend to be), both as a contribution to the history of human society, and as bearing directly upon the great practical questions which at present engage, or ought to engage, the attention of the civilised world.

One great inducement to publication having been my desire to draw attention to the existing condition and prospects of the Circassian tribes, while circumstances so greatly conduce to give these subjects an exciting interest, I should have let a valuable opportunity pass by, if I had waited to make the investigations necessary, in order to entitle

me to express fully my own opinion of the history of Circassia. And apart from all personal considerations, I cannot but look upon it as advantageous to the public—to the nation, that I should thus early communicate such information as I possess in regard to the present situation of that country. I have therefore remained satisfied with telling what I saw, and what I thought while it was passing before my eyes. My facts are, I believe, candidly narrated; my opinions are my own, and liable to error; but I have endeavoured that they should not be so confounded with my narrative of events as to falsify it, should they themselves prove inaccurate. The facts which I have stated seem to me to warrant the opinion I have intimated above, that the Circassians are an aboriginal race, and that, although their modes of thought may have occasionally received a tinge from their Christian and Mussulman neighbours, they are essentially a self-educated people.

On revising the following journal, which, as has been hinted, was written in the freedom and confidence of private communications, during leisure from my private avocations, and without any definite views as to the future, I have deemed it best, for the reasons above specified—while merely blending together, for the sake of greater consistency, the letters

written to various individuals—to give the sketches as they were originally taken, in the hope that, however deficient in delicacy of touch, they may at all events be allowed to possess some claim to the more valuable characteristic of truth; and that, in not attempting a finish beyond my power, nor an advocacy of the merits of the subject beyond what its merits warrant, I may at least escape having applied to me,

> "A vile encomium doubly ridicules;
> There's nothing blackens like the ink of fools."

At all events, without presuming to institute any comparison between the accomplished author of the "Sketches of Persia" and myself, I may be permitted to say, in his words: "I can truly affirm that the sense and the nonsense; the anecdotes, the fables, and the tales—all, in short, which these volumes contain, with the exception of a few sage reflections of my own, do actually belong to the good people amongst whom they profess to have been collected.*"

* Since writing the above, I have seen the advertisement of a publication by my friend Mr. Longworth, viz., "A Year among the Circassians." I am glad to catch this opportunity of asserting for his work the same titles derived from actual experience as I have claimed for my own, and of giving my humble testimony as to the pleasure and profit that may be expected in perusing Mr. Longworth's narrative; for although I have not yet read it, I think that the experience of nearly a year (during which we were associated intimately and most amicably)

If the same general impression with regard to the character of the Circassians shall be made upon the minds of my readers as has been made upon my own, I shall have attained all I wish, and all I have any right to expect. The egotism, which has annoyed me, I believe to be almost inseparable from a personal narrative: on this account I hope it will be forgiven.

The fate of Turkey I believe to be intimately connected with that of Circassia. The destruction of one Mussulman state in the Crimea, first put Turkey in imminent jeopardy: the destruction of another in Circassia will in all human probability precipitate her doom.

No one who has studied the history of Russia (meagre though it be), and has watched the general tendency of her policy and transactions in the East, can well doubt of a resolution having been formed when the Crimea was captured, and having been ever since acted upon by her government, to make of Constantinople the southern capital of the empire —and all doubt would be removed by his visiting

warrants me in anticipating, and leading others to anticipate, that his highly classical acquirements, fervid imagination, and generous disposition, must have shed much light over that *terra incognita*—the Caucasian world. On this subject the public will now have the evidence of two eye-witnesses.

Turkey, and becoming more intimately acquainted than he can be at a distance with the vast yet well-organised agency the Russian Government has established, and keeps in constant operation, for the gradual disruption of all the social bands that have hitherto constituted the strength of the fabric of Ottoman power. From the complacency, however, with which the public journals—almost without exception—view a recurrence to the *ultima ratio* of England's force as an eventual and effectual remedy for any errors in our Eastern policy into which the present Government may be leading us, it would appear that no suspicion is entertained of anything materially wrong being actually in progress; while the fact is, that the whole moral and political machinery necessary for the accomplishment of Russia's designs is at this moment, as it has long been, in full and effectual operation; and any disagreement that could lead to our effectual remedy must therefore be carefully avoided. To promote these designs are rebellions in Turkey excited; her territory invaded and curtailed; her fiscal regulations interfered with; her Christian subjects taken under protection; the navigation of the Danube impeded; and the Black Sea closed against the warships of other countries. To these ends separation

of interest and of policy is caused between England and France—to the hastening of the desired crisis in the affairs of Europe when Constantinople may be taken possession of, without the risk of any of the distracted states of Europe interfering, amid dangers still greater and more imminent; and England may yet find, when too late, that she has been even more fatally duped in the Convention of London of 1840, for the strengthening of Turkey, than she was in the Treaty of London of 1827, for "the pacification of the East"—resulting in the destruction of the Turkish fleet at the Battle of Navarino; the invasion, bankruptcy, and dismemberment of Turkey; and the appropriation of Circassia!

A FEW remarks may be required in explanation and defence of the system of orthography adopted in writing Circassian words and proper names. Various attempts have of late years been made to introduce one general standard of geographical orthography. Whoever adverts to the necessity of expressing in European characters (characters which to a certain extent indicate different sounds to each of the different European nations) articulate sounds applied to designate localities, by tribes, either destitute of the art of writing, or employing systems

of writing materially different from ours, must see the importance of these attempts. Without entering into specific criticism of the numerous systems which have been submitted to the public, two reasons have prevented me from adopting any of them. In the first place, none of them rests upon a sufficiently accurate and extensive analysis of articulate sound to be universally applicable: in the second, none of them has yet received any degree of general currency. The attention of literary men has been turned to the subject, and several creditable efforts have been made—that is all. At this stage a plain man can do no more than adhere in his own writings to one system, and tell the public what that system is: and this accordingly is what I have done in my attempts to represent in English characters the articulate sounds of the Circassian language. That language being an unwritten one, has on the one hand left me free from the difficulty of attempting to express in one set of characters sounds habitually associated with another set, not exactly the counterparts of the former; but it has, on the other, left me to learn the sounds from oral sources alone, exposed to all the mistakes arising from defects which may exist in the speaker's organ of speech, or the hearer's organ of hearing, and from the want of fixity necessarily existing in unwritten languages.

I have employed the English consonants to express the elementary sounds which they express in our own language. I have refrained from using the equivocal *c* (sometimes equivalent to *s*, and sometimes to *k*); and I have written *j* instead *dj*, the prefixed *d* being unnecessary to an Englishman, although necessary to a Frenchman. I have used *tsh* instead of *ch*, as the use of the latter combination in the *patois* of the northern part of the island, and in the language of Germany (now so generally cultivated) to express the aspirate χ, might lead to confusion: and I have employed *kh* instead of *ch* to denote that aspirate, for the same reason that induced me to substitute *k* or *s* in all cases for *c*. In regard to the vowels, I have used the five principal—*a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*—to express the sounds designated by them in Italian—a sufficient minuteness of division for all practical purposes. In regard to *e*, *i*, and *u*, however, which in most languages are pronounced sometimes with their full power and sometimes muffled (if I may use the phrase), I have expressed the muffled sound by the simple letters *e*, *i*, *u*, the full rich sound by the accented letters *é*, *í*, *ú*. In the termination of a word, *e* denotes a half-syllable destitute of any specific vowel sound; *eh* the full sound of the vowel. The result of the observance

of these rules is the adoption of the following system of vowels, and of the English simple consonants, with the modifications indicated in the annexed table :—

VOWELS.

a—as in hard.
e—as in bed.
é—as *a* in bate.
i—as *ee* in been
í—as *ea* in pea.
o—as in bold.
u—as in but.
û—as *oo* in boot.

Diphthongs (where they occur) really combine the powers of the two characters written, and in the order of sequence in which they are written : *aí*, *íû*, *aû*.

When two vowels are placed together, with a diæresis over either, each must be distinctly articulated, as if an imperceptible breathing (the *spiritus lenis* of the Greeks) intervened.

CONSONANTS.

g—always hard, like the Italian *gh*.

j—The English sound, equivalent to *dsh*.

tsh—standing in the same relation to *j* that *t* does to *d*.

kh—the Greek χ, the German *ch*.

gh—standing in the same relation to *kh* that *g* does to *k*.

London, 17th August, 1840.

CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

LETTER I.

PAGE

Journal of a Voyage from Sinope to the Coast of Circassia . . 1

LETTER II.

First week in Circassia 24

LETTER III.

Transient Visit to the Southern Chiefs, and Journey northward . 47

LETTER IV.

Journey from Pshat to Semez 78

LETTER V.

A Circassian Congress 102

LETTER VI.

Breaking up of the Congress—Residence in the Upper Valleys of Abûn and Pshat 128

LETTER VII.

Residence at Semez 156

LETTER VIII.

Residence at Semez continued—Glimpse into the Structure of Circassian Society 177

LETTER IX.

PAGE

Residence at Semez continued—Diplomacy—Haymaking and Harvest —Geology—Border War 207

LETTER X.

Russian Plot—Another Congress—The Kûban—Return to Semez—Another Congress—An Envoy at a loss 233

LETTER XI.

A Circassian "Like-Wake"—Arrival of another Englishman—The Emperor at Ghelenjík—The Russian Army recrosses the Kûban—Detection and Punishment of Spies—Predicament of the Eastern Provinces—Antiquarian Research—Feast of Merem—Geology . 262

LETTER XII.

Visits among the Tokavs—Salt-Spring—Pitch-Spring—Superabundance of Circassian Feasts—The Plain of the Kûban—Russian News—Renegade Circassians—Circassian Ostentation—Circassian Minstrelsy—Funeral Feasts 287

LETTER XIII.

Female Education—Lady Visiters—Comforts of Ramazan when it falls about the Winter Solstice 310

LETTER XIV.

Taking the Oath—Particulars of the Secession of the Abbats—Tausch, the Russian Emissary—the Tleûsh, or Fraternities of the Circassians—"A Love Tale" 329

LETTER XV.

A Man without a Gun—Circassian Prayer-Meetings—The Mrs. Glasse of Circassia—Mensûr and his War-Stories—Mohammedans the Radicals of Circassia—The Twelve Confederate Provinces of Circassia—Strange Conduct of Shamuz—Modes of Emancipating Serfs—Doubts and Difficulties—History and Productions of Shapsuk 349

LETTER XVI.

PAGE

Return to Semez—Difference of the Winter Temperature at Semez and to the North of the Hills—Medical Practice and Circassian Prejudices—Military Movements — Mensûr's Oration—Disappointed Volunteers—More Disappointments 376

LETTER XVII.

Weakening of the Aristocracy in Circassia—Conjectures regarding the Origin of the Circassians—Serfs, or Pshilt—Thfokotl, or Freemen —Pshe, or Princes—Vork, or Noblemen—Departure of Nadir Bey —More Russian Aggression 402

LETTER XVIII.

Journey to the South—Ancient Fortress—Extraordinary conduct of Shamuz—Wine—Languages spoken on the Coast—A Congress in the South 425

LIST OF PLATES IN VOL. I.

	TO FACE PAGE
1. FRONTISPIECE—HADJI GHUZ BEG . .	Title.
2. ANCIENT TOMB IN THE VALLEY OF PSHAT . .	154
3. PORTRAIT OF THREE CIRCASSIAN NOTABLES . .	242
4. MAP OF CIRCASSIA	(at the end.)

NARRATIVE

OF A

RESIDENCE IN CIRCASSIA.

LETTER I.

JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE FROM SINOPE TO THE COAST OF CIRCASSIA.

At Sea. Friday, 14th April, 1837.

MY DEAR ——. My resolution to return to Circassia, in order to complete the researches which had been so unseasonably interrupted, was formed the day after my arrival at Constantinople, subsequent to the capture of the Vixen.

Preparation having been made for the expedition in the form of a plentiful assortment of presents: guns, sabres, and telescopes, for the chiefs; necklaces and bracelets for their ladies; and other articles for their dependants; I sailed on the 1st of April by the steamer for Trebizond. The information, however, which I received during the voyage, relative to the interruption of communication between that port and Circassia, by the agency of the Russian consul, induced me to land at Sinope. Samsûn and Sinope are the ports on the coast of Asia Minor most frequented by the Circassians; and while I was inquiring in person after a vessel at the latter, I sent my servant,

Luca, to the former, to see what could be done there. Luca had shared in my captivity, and yet had joyfully reimbarked with me. His orders were to return without delay, by land or water; but some difficulties, which arose out of his neglect to provide himself with a *tishkerreh*, or pass, prevented his rejoining me before the 8th.

As soon as I became known, the Circassians seemed to take me under their especial charge. The first proof I had of their good-will was the alacrity with which they set themselves to transport my luggage to the quarters assigned to me, and to put the apartment in order. But, for various reasons, I preferred accepting from Captain Watson, of the English ship Arundel, a kind invitation to live on board his vessel till my servant's return. I half regretted having come to this determination when I saw the evident mortification it gave the Circassians. One of them in particular, a young man with a fine intelligent expression of countenance, who had from the first declared he would bear me company to his own country, objected vehemently to my going on board the English vessel, —saying, he was afraid they would not use me well. This fear was excited, as I afterwards learned, by a drunken exhibition which the sailors (English sailor like) had made on the only day they were permitted to go on shore.

I turned the time of my servant's detention to the best account I could, by making a conditional arrangement for our passage with the master of a small schooner—of some 25 tons burthen—which was about to sail, and getting prepared on board the Arundel a

chart, reel-log, &c.—articles seldom found on board a Turkish coaster. As soon as Luca returned, I concluded the bargain definitively, appointing the evening of the next day for sailing, and the forenoon for making payment of the passage-money. While counting it out, the captain demanded double the sum agreed upon, under pretext that he had, on my account, forborne taking any more cargo. As I had made no stipulation to that effect, and was of opinion that the two thousand piasters I had agreed to give were sufficient remuneration, I put an end to the conference by pocketing my money, and asked the Bey of Sinope, whom I had invited to witness the payment, to procure me a boat to carry me to Samsûn. He readily promised to give me the use of his own for nothing, and reproached the captain for his conduct, although—on account of my having omitted to ratify the bargain by paying a small sum to account, as is the Turkish custom—he could afford me no redress.

While they were getting ready the boat for Samsûn, I went on board the Arundel, and was pleased to find, when I returned to the shore, that Luca had succeeded in bringing Captain Khader of the schooner to reason. In this he had been materially assisted by Sheriff—a fat old Turkish merchant, much engaged in the Circassian trade—and by the Circassians. Several of the latter said, that if he did not come to terms with me, instead of sailing with him, they would accompany me to Samsûn. Their weight thrown into my scale induced the captain to promise that he would abide by his original terms, provided I would wait two days for the completion of his cargo. A couple

of days' delay was preferable to a voyage to Samsûn, and all the *tracasserie* of a new bargain: accordingly I consented to stay, and paid my earnest-money. Nor have I had any cause to regret this arrangement; for on Sunday and Monday the wind was foul; and although on Tuesday it was favourable, it changed again on Wednesday, and blew a heavy gale at night. On Thursday it was again favourable; but I deemed it politic to yield to the urgency of Sheriff and Captain Khader, to allow Friday (the Mahomedan Sabbath) to be fairly begun before we sailed, in order that prayers for a prosperous voyage might be offered up in the Mosk. Accordingly, it was half-past eight this morning before we got under weigh.

The morning was calm and lovely; and as we towed our little schooner (with a Circassian flag flying which I had procured from the Captain of a vessel lately arrived) under the stern of the huge Arundel, that ship fired a salute and hoisted the union-jack, to greet a new sister on the ocean, and in token of the lively interest all on board felt in my enterprise. We were not behindhand in acknowledging the honour, with a rusty little two-pounder, which was so well charged, that it waked the echoes of the hill above us in fine style.

This hill, about 300 feet high, is the termination of a peninsula, on the narrowest part of the neck of which Sinope is built. The magnificent old walls of the city are of great height, and studded with lofty towers, and extend from the south-eastern to the north-western bay, and along both shores. They encompass the Turkish portion of the town, which is

thus entirely separated from that inhabited by the Greeks and Armenians. Towards the land these walls are double, and their security was formerly further increased by a deep fosse. Wandering round them, and indulging in the thoughts they were calculated to inspire, formed my chief amusements; for although Turkish inscriptions, inserted in many places, indicate who are their present masters, in others are to be seen Greek and Latin inscriptions, numerous fragments of beautifully executed alto-relievos, friezes, capitals, entablatures, fluted marble columns, &c. &c., which attest their age and real parentage, as well as the revolutions that have occurred here. Over a gate on the northern side I observed a long and very distinct Greek inscription, although its height prevented my reading and copying it; and on part of a column, with its capital reversed, and now hollowed out and used as a mortar, there was inscribed, "Divo Antonino, Divi Antonini," &c. An antiquary would find this town worthy an examination. It is, however, a confusedly ill-built place, and has nothing interesting about it but these antique walls and its picturesque situation.

The adjoining country presents a continuous range of hills, increasing in elevation as they recede from the coast, and of infinite variety of form,—many being conical, and probably volcanic, as are those which occupy the greater portion of the coast towards the west, in which direction I feel assured that a geologist would find his labours richly compensated. An excursion to the southward of Sinope brought me among some pleasant little hills, with lanes among

them bordered by luxuriant evergreens—under which were nestled most fragrant violets—and to many snug-looking farmsteads, with vineyards and orchards adjoining, where ploughing and other agricultural operations were now in busy progression.

The principal trade of Sinope consists in shipping oak—in which the neighbouring hills abound—for the imperial arsenal at Constantinople, and in building a few ships; and its bay has latterly become a station where the Trebizond steamers call regularly for supplies of coals. The number of Turks and Persians who, now that their apprehensions are overcome, constantly pass to and fro in these steamers, is very considerable—generally from 60 to 100 each trip; and it may be readily conjectured how great and beneficial will be the change that must ere long be wrought, both physically and morally, by such frequent contact among the members of communities hitherto kept apart, as much by physical obstacles as by religious prejudice. The steamers at present employed are frequently unable to take all the cargo offered, and a larger one is about to be placed on the line. Why have English capitalists neglected so valuable an opening?

Our Circassian passengers are five in number; they came on board with a goodly quantity of luggage —merchandize I presume. Their first care was to examine their arms and ammunition, thereby keeping me in mind of the possibility of my becoming involved "in politics"—as a friend in Constantinople expressed it—before reaching the Circassian shore.

The wind to-day was E.S.E. till 2 P.M., when we

got abreast of Gherzeh; it then suddenly shifted to S.S.E., and has since continued to blow a fine steady breeze, enabling us to lie our direct course for Pshat.

Saturday, 15*th*.—The breeze of yesterday afternoon continued all last night, and till four this afternoon. It has now fallen, but we must already have run about eighty miles of our direct course—a tolerably propitious commencement. Captain Khader I find a lively, good-humoured person, who jokes and talks with all around. He and I mess together; that is to say, there is prepared for us, twice a day, a stew of dried salt meat, eggs, and onions; off which I first *regale*, and then hand the rest to him. We have then each a cuplet of sugarless coffee, and a pipe, all on deck. Our other meals, throughout the day, are quite irregular and optional, and consist of bread, garlic, olives and capsicums. Luckily I have some figs, apples, and walnuts, of my own providing, which I substitute for these other fruits. Poor Luca, as on his former voyages, eats scarcely anything. He and I have the fore-hatch assigned us; the main being occupied by the other passengers; and the after one reserved for the captain and crew—or, rather, for their stores and provisions,—for, as yet, they have slept on the quarter-deck. I have had furnished me a carpet, mattress, and coverlet; and Luca uses my blanket and saddle-cloth, while my saddle and saddle-bags serve for pillows. All this I recount for the benefit of future travellers. I hope we may not be "bows under" before getting to land; in that case our berth will be a wet one.

One of the Circassians seems greatly to delight

himself and Hassan, his eagle-eyed friend, by playing upon a very simple instrument—a species of mandoline. It is a stick about two feet long, hollowed out to the bark, and pierced towards the lower end with three holes. The upper end has no mouth-piece, but the performer, stopping half of the circle of the tube with his lips and tongue, and blowing down the remainder, produces a few very sweet notes, some of which he accompanies with an inarticulate vocal sound. One of his favourite melodies has just eight notes, besides grace-notes, and the three last are played an octave below the rest. Hassan accompanies him with his voice, and beats time audibly to each note. Some of the melodies are much longer than the one I have mentioned. In general they are plaintive, but a few are lively; and if, without knowing, I were asked what they were, I should probably have replied "Old Scottish 'lilts.'" I have just learned that this pastoral musician is a Circassian shepherd, who has been in Turkey trying to get employment, and not having succeeded, is getting his passage home in charity. He looks like one "who loves to live i' the sun," but his features are good and his teeth beautiful.

The breeze lulled for about an hour only — as it were to give me time to write up this journal—and has again freshened from the same quarter as before.

Sunday, 16*th*, 5½ A.M.—A lovely sunrise! but its calmness and light airs chopping about dispose us to admire the scene as little as the crew of a Cornish gin-boat, similarly circumstanced, in the English Channel. What we now want is a stiff

breeze to enable us to get sight of land before night, and thus take measures for making a run through the Russian cruisers. The wind fell, almost entirely, about one this morning, and has continued very light ever since.

Our vessel has no vane; but when Khader wishes to see how to brace the yards, he sticks out his long pipe, which is seldom out of his hand, over the gunwale, and the smoke perfectly answers the purpose. Who says the Turks are destitute of humour? Our captain is full of it; alike, while we have sat during the last two moonlight nights, passengers and sailors promiscuously, on his quarter-deck enjoying the favouring breeze, or now that we mope about the narrow limits, desponding at its absence; and a young gipsy-looking lad, with elf-locks hanging about his neck, now at the helm—for, unlike the Russians, all of them can steer well—is the very personification of fun and happiness. Khader frequently asks me if I wish to eat, and tells me to ask for what I want, as all he has is at my disposal. All he bargains for in return is that I shall speak a good word for him among the Circassians when we land. He even wished me to promise to call the vessel mine; but this I, of course, declined, promising however to tell how well he used me. Such is already the position, among both Turks and Circassians, we English have at our disposal! The wind has at length become favourable, and now blows in a light steady breeze from the N.N.W., so that we can again lie our course.

2 P.M.—The favourable breeze soon fell; and

for about two hours we were almost asleep upon the waters; or, I should rather say, the schooner only; for her inmates have been doing their best to "go ahead." We have on board a Mollah who is making his first trading voyage to Circassia. He has written a verse from the Koran which he has had tied aloft in the rigging; and a Koran belonging to a very mild-looking Turk has been hung up at the stern. These are believed to be efficacious means of procuring a good wind, and our experience so far does not prove the contrary; for a two-knot breeze has just set in from the N.N.W. again. The weather is exceedingly fine and promising in appearance.

The Circassians and some of the sailors are very regular in their daily prayers, and all equally so in their ablutions. My fare, as has been shown, is far from sumptuous; but it is served in a much more cleanly manner than is common, I suspect, among vessels of the same class on our coasts. Khader has a Turkish chart of the Black Sea, which appears on the whole pretty well laid down, but that the capes and bays are not a little "*trop prononcés.*" He handles his vessel, too, as if he were used to it; so that I really feel a degree of security such as I never experienced among the apprentice-crew of the Russian Ajax.

Monday, 17th, 5 P.M.—We did very little good the greater part of yesterday and all last night; for during the latter we had to stand away S.S.E., owing to light wind from the E. accompanied by some fog. This course had to be persisted in till about

six this morning, when the wind freshened and got to the eastward of S., where it has continued all day, enabling us to run nearly our course, at the rate of five knots.

A swallow flew by a little ago: that is an omen of good; but my writing has just been stopped by those on deck declaring they can hear cannon-firing. They have been looking out aloft, but show no disposition to turn; yet they are busy getting studding-sails ready in case of need. Twelve cannon-reports were counted. Possibly some poor bark like our own was the victim. How long will such iniquity be permitted!

These Turkish sailors have a very impressive usage, of assembling regularly on the quarter-deck after sunset, when one of them—the mate—says aloud a short prayer for fair wind and safety; and at its conclusion all exclaim together, Amen!

Old Khader has "roughed it," for he has been in the Circassian trade, winter and summer, and in spite of the Russian blockade, for the last twenty-five years: and at the very time when the Russians were shedding their crocodile tears for his country at Unkiar Skellessi, his vessel was captured by their cruisers on the Circassian coast; he, his crew, and passengers, including a Circassian female, to the number of nine persons, escaping in such a little cock-boat as we now tow astern; in which they made their way to the coast near Samsûn in four days.

Tuesday, 18*th*.—All last night I kept myself awake, watching what was going on upon deck, as I

was very desirous that no opportunity of getting to land should be lost. But, unfortunately, none occurred; for we had to lie-to with our head to the southward, going about one knot an hour that way, for the greater part of it. In this state I found things on all my visits to the deck. At three, all were asleep, but one, who was singing to keep himself awake, the fear of Russian vessels surprising us not having been sufficient for that purpose. But as it had occurred to me from what I had observed at Ghelenjik, that the twelve cannon-reports we had heard might probably be the salutes of two vessels entering that harbour, and the reply thereto of the admiral, I had the captain waked, and suggested this to him. He concurred in the probability; and if our conjecture be right, this proves what Khader had latterly told me of a current on this coast setting towards the north; for if we be abreast of Ghelenjik, we are about thirty-five miles north of what my reckoning gives; and the south-easterly wind we have had, renders this great divergence the more probable. The Russians have thus done one good turn!

About daylight this morning we put about to N.E. by N., and the rising sun showed us two hill-tops; but at such a distance, that no one seemed to recognise them with certainty: some said they were over Pshat; others, on the coast towards Anapa. Still the sight served to cheer us. This feeling, however, was but of short duration; for the wind soon got more to the eastward, and blew so stiffly and raised such a sea, that Khader lost patience and put about

the vessel's head towards Sinope. I remonstrated strongly against this; and, at length, he took my advice, and stood S. by W. In this course he persevered till 2 P.M., when the wind and sea still increasing, he declared he would hold on no longer, as a gale from the hills was coming on. It certainly looked portentous to windward, so I gave the matter up in despair, and retired to my berth to try and get relief from a headache which I attributed partly to want of proper food, as the high sea had prevented cooking, and I had dined with the sailors on garlic and bread experimentally. My feelings at this time were by no means enviable, as I felt forced to take a gloomy view of matters, and to imagine myself returned to Sinope, baffled, and all my plans disconcerted. In a couple of hours, however, these blue devils were dispelled by the wind falling and becoming more favourable, so that we again lay our course, and continued to do so all night. About eight I went to rest, intending to be up through the night, and see that a good look-out was kept, fearing that the rest, like myself, were losing apprehension of the cruisers, from being used to it. But on this occasion I sinned most, as I slept soundly and dreamed pleasantly till a quarter to three; when, on going on deck, I found the seamen all at their duty, and two of the Circassians at theirs, viz. on the outlook for the Russians, about whom Khader seems to trouble himself but little, minding chiefly the trim of his sails.

Wednesday, 19*th*.—Pursuing our course, as I have said, sunrise again showed us several conical

hill-tops, which the Circassians seemed to agree among themselves must be those of Pshat; and my former view of it made me think them right. Studding-sails were immediately rigged; and, with the wind on our larboard quarter, we were running rapidly in upon the land and all in high spirits, when the faithless wind, veering round towards the Russians at Ghelenjik, forced us to take in first one sail and then another, and finally to bear away to the southward. This course we continued till noon, by which time, as Khader had predicted, the wind had veered round to S.E. by S.; and now, half-past one, it blows so freshly, that we are running back for Pshat at the rate of five to six knots. Khader is in high glee and passes jokes on all round. Among others, he said to a broad-grinning elderly Circassian gentleman, who lives near Anapa—is, it seems, the owner of the greater part of the cargo, and has had "le mal de mer"—that he was happy to see him again on deck; for, when he was asleep so often and forgot to say his prayers, we had bad winds. I told Khader that in England they thought the Turks could not joke, but that I was happy to see so merry a one as he. "Yes, yes," said he, "I have one old wife and one son, and whenever I can make some money for them, I can laugh and be happy all day long."

5 P.M.—The wind has again fallen, and a heavy swell, added to the current, is, I fear, carrying us too far northward; but we may have better fortune, as the Mollah [he is, by the bye, not a Mollah, but a devout Georgian Mussulman, named Ismael] has

bethought him of an expedient for "raising the wind;" viz., going round among his co-religionists with a little cup for paras to buy candles to place in the mosque of a saintly dervish at Sinab, which paras have been wrapped up in a piece of rag and tied round the tiller. I mean no disrespectful insinuation: the man has an honest face, and I doubt not the money will be faithfully applied.

This evening, about eight, some fog set in, but soon abated, and left us a gentle breeze from the southward; and after the sails were trimmed to it, the evening prayer said, and a watch set on the forecastle, the rest assembled aft—Khader and I upon our little divan—when the steersman proposed telling us a tale to pass the time. While he knelt, as they generally do, with the tiller under his arm, and a pipe in one hand, the other being free for action, with the moonlight shed fully upon his mild expressive features, and the figures of his auditory—Turks and Circassians alternately—and especially on old Khader, who sat stately behind, with his bronzed and then sedate features—his burly figure clad in red trimmed with blue, his yellow slippers and capacious orange-coloured turban,—I thought our quarter-deck would make no bad picture.

"Formerly," began the steersman, "there was a sultan who had lived to the age of a hundred, and was possessed of great power and wealth, yet he was unhappy; and a certain dervish came to him and said, 'Sultan, thou possessest great power and wealth, and hast lived to a good old age, and yet thou art unhappy: thou art unwilling to tell me the cause,

but I can divine it; and if thou wilt abide by my counsel, it shall be removed.' The sultan assented," &c. &c. The story-teller had held on only about three-quarters of an hour, when a shift of wind broke in upon him. The sails were trimmed, and it was resumed; but the wind soon deserted us, and Hassan, one of the most lively of the Circassians—an iron-nerved person in appearance, and who had, no doubt, something else to think of, so near his home, than sultans and dervishes—made a loud call to take to the oars, and, seizing one himself, set a vigorous example. Yet we have but bad prospects for the night.

Thursday, 20th.—I remained on deck till three this morning, continually tantalized by the hope of a wind to take us at once to land; for every quarter of an hour or so, a fresh breeze sprung up, and, after carrying us a mile or two, died away again. When it fell, we took to our oars, abandoning them as soon as another breeze arose from the opposite quarter, only to die away like its predecessor. These alternations between winds from the S.E. and N.W., and our oars in the lulls, took place times without number, till at length I got out of patience with them, and retired for an hour or two's rest. Till ten o'clock this forenoon, things were little better; but about that time, a steady and fresh breeze arose from the S.E. to S.S.E., and enabled us to run in quickly upon the land. We held on this course till about an hour ago—2 P.M.—and had been much disappointed at not having been able all day to see any of the very high land about Pshat,—from which, by calculation,

we should have been not far distant,—when, as good or bad luck would have it—for this remains to be proved—I asserted that I saw land on the lee-bow. Some admitted and some disputed the appearance; the consequence of which was, that one went aloft, and there saw more than we wanted; viz., a large ship between us and the land. Khader was immediately aroused from a nap, and the vessel put about seaward. All eyes were for some time eagerly turned aft, to see if we were pursued. Of this there is as yet no appearance, for the ship is already below the horizon; and, therefore, our bugbear must, according to general assent, have been either a merchantman, or a man-of-war with a very bad look-out. So little fear, and so great desire to get ashore have the Circassians, that they have already proposed turning back, and I have just been called to council. I dissented from the proposal, both because it would be very ridiculous for us to go and decide the question just now, whether the vessel we saw was a merchantman or a man-of-war with a bad look-out, and because we are, by the hills we have seen—for the fog has just left them—between Pshat and Ghelenjik, and therefore too far north to make the former without great difficulty. I advised, therefore, standing as near south as possible for five or six hours, and then again trying to make our port.

Our greatest misfortune these four days past, next to foul winds, has been, that the hills were almost constantly inveloped in clouds, so that we could not correct our reckonings, which it must be difficult to

make accurately here, until something more certain be known about the velocity of the current to the north, and its extent. In clear weather, which they say is most frequent, the lofty hills are infallible guides.

Friday, 21*st*. — Yesterday evening we had, for some time, a bright full moon, and not even a fleece of cloud to obscure it. The sea almost slept in the moon-beams; while a gentle breath of wind wafted us on our course.

For some time I sat enchanted by the still scene; for even our decks were noiseless, through my mess-mates' apprehension of an eclipse I had foretold, and whose effects, it seemed, they could not anticipate without dread, although I had explained the nature of the phenomenon. "It is the will of God," was all they said to my representations.

At length I bethought me of taking an hour's rest below, as I had determined to spend most of the night on deck, to see again that no opportunity of getting to land was lost.

Clouds succeeded the eclipse; but they brought little wind, and that little very variable; so we determined to make a night of rowing, each in half-hour spells. At these I took my turn, and morning would have brought us some relief, as the wind began then to rise favourably; and the earliest dawn showed us the mountains, only some forty miles ahead. The joy occasioned by this discovery was brief; for, soon after, the mate, on going aloft, declared he saw a sail to windward; and, while we were inspecting it more narrowly through our glasses,

another was descried, both vessels running along the coast before the wind from the northward.

All were now roused to action: four more, in all eight, oars were manned, and studding-sails set. As we neared the land, the vessels neared us, our courses forming then an acute angle, and they were soon ascertained to be two Russian men-of-war. The nearest one appeared to be a three-masted cutter of six guns, and the other, much larger vessel, a gun-brig.

When the smaller one came within five or six miles of us, Khader cut adrift the boat which, during the voyage, had been towed astern. We soon saw a boat with a sail put off from the cutter, to capture the persons who they concluded were endeavouring to escape. This had the effect of making our enemy so many hands less efficient. At this crisis, I strongly urged throwing overboard everything that was not of immediate use, and staving our only remaining water-cask. The Turks, however, had no notion of sacrificing any part of their property; so the only articles they heaved overboard were the gun-carriage (the rusty little two-pounder was below and could not be got at) and my Circassian flag. The cutter commenced firing the moment they believed us to be within range. The first shots fell short, and only served to stimulate the exertions of the rowers. My experience of Russian seamanship led me to anticipate chances of escape. I was not disappointed. Twice before the cutter neared us, way was lost by the necessity of altering her course, owing to her commander having endeavoured to run in upon us, instead of heading and getting between us and the

part of the coast we were running for. Four or five times, while running alongside and nearly on our quarter, with her shot passing far beyond us, did she lose way by altering her course, either for the purpose of closing in with us, or of bringing her broadside to bear, the guns at the bow being apparently (from their report) of smaller dimensions. The Turks were now in despair, and talked of striking the sails in token of submission. The mild-looking Turk with the Koran, when urged to join in rowing, replied, that he had no strength left in him. But the Circassians were in a mood to avail themselves of the lubberliness of their pursuers. Khamti, the broad-grinning old gentleman, from the neighbourhood of Anapa, drew his dagger upon Khader the moment he talked of surrender. Ismail, the devout Mollah, had the day before, when the first vessel was seen, proposed that we should load our fire-arms (setting at the same time the example) and die fighting rather than be taken. This resolution was now adopted. All the Circassians placed their daggers in their belts to keep the sailors to their duty. This demonstration obliged two young Turks, who were crying, to hoist again the sails they had lowered in despair; and in their trembling hurry, they gave one of them (a studding-sail) a twist, which, for want of time to remedy, it was allowed to retain during our run.

The dilatoriness of the Russians in firing was as remarkable as their slovenly style of manœuvring; yet some of their shots were well enough aimed. I heard one pass between our masts, and another

through one of the sails forward, and several struck the water very near us.

On the whole, our distance from shore, and the superior rig and trim of our adversary, seemed to render our case desperate, notwithstanding his awkwardness, and the spirit of the Circassians. I had gone below for a few minutes, to get some of my rather excessive stock of powder ready to be thrown overboard, and to get a letter, which it would have been imprudent to have about me when taken, ready for destruction. While thus employed, by a chance look up the hatchway, I caught the keen eyes of Achmajan, the same who declared at Sinope his determination to accompany me. Although of low stature, and rather slender (except about the shoulders), he had proved himself a perfect hero, by his strength, courage, address in managing the sailors, and unflagging spirit. I had been rowing at the same oar with him (all our heavier oars were double-manned) for the last two hours, and could not perceive the slightest diminution of his strength. As his fine dark eye (his features are all delicately handsome) met mine, he cried, "Ah, Capitan!" with an imploring expression that must have been irresistible, if I ever had thought of deserting him—so I returned immediately to his oar, and endeavoured to aid him in exciting the rest, by joining in their rowing chaunt, or in a cheer of "Madge, madge!"—equivalent to the French "courage"—in reply to each shot. Latterly the cutter came within musket-range of us, when Hassan, the iron-nerved, seized his rifle, and fired two shots in succession at her—

one of which, they said, took effect. He next drew his dagger, and, brandishing it over his head, shouted some expressions of defiance. His piping friend, the shepherd, took things more coolly, yet joined in the rowing chaunt, and pulled with unabating vigour, though with sad want of science.

At length we got so near the coast, that we could see the natives rushing down the hills, and streaming along the beach, from both sides, towards the point for which we were making. On seeing this, our Circassians, who had been singing together their beautiful rowing chaunt, "Arira-ri-ra," set up a scream of piercing shrillness, to which their countrymen on shore sent back an equally ear-piercing reply. In a short time, a boat, literally crammed with armed men, was alongside of us. We wished them to come on board, and aid our rowing; but they preferred rowing in a half-circle round us, as if to show the cutter we were under their protection. The Russians seemed to think that this reinforcement of 24 or 25 men was not be trifled with, for the cutter was immediately layed to, while its crew vented their disappointment in some random shots, which splashed here and there about us.

The gun-brig had by this time arrived in the offing, where she also brought to, and sent us an occasional ball, which was treated by those of our side with much indifference, the shoreward view having by this time become much more interesting.

There a dense mass of warriors was now collected. When we came sufficiently near, three young men stripped, and swam off to us, to carry our cable

ashore; and were met half-way on their return by a fourth, bringing them aid. A large boat, which I had observed being launched to the southward, reached us about this time, to aid in carrying our goods ashore had the firing continued; but the Russians, seeing our strength, made sail seaward.

LETTER II.

FIRST WEEK IN CIRCASSIA.

SÛBESH, 24*th April*, 1837.

MY DEAR ——. — Hassan was among the first ashore; and nothing short of his robust frame could have stood the vigorous salutations of his countrymen, who pulled, and hauled, and hugged him in a most extraordinary manner. During this first explosion of feeling, I remained apart in the bow of the vessel—her stern was shoreward. Luca, by my directions, had previously got my luggage ready for speedy debarkation, had events rendered it necessary. During the chase, he had helped to row as far as his strength, which is not great, would permit; not the less vigorously, perhaps, from a disinclination to fall a second time into the hands of the Russians. As soon as an opportunity offered, he informed some of the principal people present who I was: one or two of them came forward immediately, and invited me to go on shore, leaving my property in their custody. I readily acquiesced in this arrangement. A corner of a fenced field was pointed out as an eligible spot for me to wait in, and thither every article belonging to me was brought, without one word being said about porterage.

An incident which occurred at this, the moment of my first setting foot in Çircassia, convinced me that its inhabitants, although they have generally

adopted the creed of the Turks, do still refuse to follow out, in all its absurd strictness, their doctrine of fatality. I perceived some hesitation, or at least delay, in the arrangements for our landing; and I was delighted to learn, that it was owing to certain quarantine regulations established here, in consequence of which, even in our circumstances, we were not permitted to communicate with those on shore, until our captain had taken an oath on the Koran that there was no plague at the port he came from. Notwithstanding this assurance, all the goods landed were immediately carried (slung on poles) to a building set apart for the purpose, and there fumigated. It was the fear of the plague which dictated these precautions, and had induced the warriors, who pushed off to our assistance, to remain in their own boat, instead of boarding our vessel and assisting us to row to the shore. For the same reason I had to wait a good while on the plot of ground pointed out to me, before a lodging could be procured for my use: and the house at last selected furnished an additional proof of their caution. It was the guest-house of a family, all the members of which, except one son, had gone, according to the custom of the country, to mourn at the house of a relation, where a death had occurred.

The name of this family is Arslanghaer. Though not wealthy, it is much respected; and my present host, a young man about twenty-eight years of age, is extremely attentive, and gentle in his manners. He scarcely leaves me for a moment, and sleeps here for the greater security of my effects. Our meals

are brought from the family-house, and he never eats till I have done. The hospitality of this people seems to be on a liberal scale. The night before last, Hassan, the companion of my voyage, came to visit me, and spent the night here. Last night we had another visitor, whom I somehow took for a brother of my host; but of whom, I have this morning discovered, he knows nothing, although he has lodged and fed him. On the evening of my arrival, my host, who is a rigid Mussulman, asked me if I drank wine or brandy. On my declining both, I observed him send back a piece of cotton cloth he had brought from his house, with the intention, no doubt, of bartering it for liquor.

This part of the country has a beautiful Highland aspect, and the coast, from Anapa to Sûkûm-Kaleh, presents, I am told, similar features—a continuous range of wooded mountains, with little valleys opening here and there. At this spot the hills extend to the sea in ridges resembling vast unbroken walls; but elsewhere they assume a conical, and, indeed, every variety of form. Almost all of them are clothed with forests, chiefly oak, to their very summit; and the trees are now putting forth their first tender leaves. The hills, as far as I can judge from a very hasty and superficial inspection, consist of a friable clay-slate; the detritus has filled the bottoms of the numerous dells with a deep and excellent soil—of which, indeed, the quantity of oak is a sufficient indication. The narrow valley of the Sûbesh—the mountain-stream on the banks of which I am at present residing—seems particularly rich, and is

highly cultivated. Trees are numerous, and all the larger ones are festooned with enormous vines, from the grapes of which, I am told, many of the inhabitants make excellent wine and brandy. Low hills skirt the valley, clothed, where not under tillage, with fruit-trees, and a beautiful carpet of grass and wild-flowers. No houses are to be seen in the valley; they lurk in clusters in the wooded dells above—a consequence, probably, of the war so long waged on this coast. Half-way up one of these hills, about a mile and a half from the beach, stands the cot I now occupy. I have an exquisite view from the green plateau in front, of the hills on either side, a part of the valley and the delta of the Sûbesh, and the sea beyond. The cottage itself, like all in this neighbourhood, has a thatched roof, resting upon walls of strong stakes, hurdled and plastered, inside and out, with clay washed with a white, or rather pale green colour. The floor, too, is of clay, and is carefully swept, and repeatedly watered during the course of the day. At one end of the room (the house consists of but one room, with a stable adjoining) is the fire-place,—a circular indenture in the floor, over which is placed a semicircular funnel, of about five feet diameter at the base, through which the smoke escapes. At one side of this fire-place is a small raised divan, well cushioned, for my accommodation; and the fire is constantly heaped with great billets of oak, which at present is very agreeable, as this is the rainy month, and, for the last two days, we have had torrents of rain, accompanied with a high cold wind. This accounts for my writing so much.

One of the servants is a Russian, taken prisoner in one of the many vessels which have fallen into the hands of the Circassians. He enters my apartment, —the door of which is kept open all day to admit the light—freely with the rest, and joins as freely in the conversation. He speaks highly of the Circassians, and of this family in particular, and says he would be quite happy if he had only money to get a wife.

Monday, 24th.—The family have returned, and a change has already become perceptible in our meals, though unobjectionable before. This is owing to the more sedulous attention of females, by which I run a chance of being oppressed, unless I make good use of the horse, which is always kept ready for exercise. Fresh supplies of pasta * and meat (either stewed or roasted)—pasta and goats' milk—pasta, or Turkey-corn bread, with honey, are kept sending in upon me, to satiety. I have had a visit, too, from one of the daughters—a very pretty girl I am told, of about sixteen—with a bowl of nuts and walnuts. Unluckily I was absent at the time. We must hope that the visit was quite disinterested, for in candour I ought to tell, that, the day before, I had a visit from the daughter of a neighbouring noble, who is here on a visit (a very pretty girl, whose head and breast were profusely decorated with lace, and other ornaments of silver), who also brought a bowl of nuts and walnuts, and to whom I presented a pair of scissors. Both these young ladies eagerly desire to go to Stambûl to push their fortune—what we call

* A thick porridge made of millet.

being sold for slaves, and, with Allan's romance of a picture before us, think of with sympathetic horror.

The father of this family—a very kind old man—overtook me yesterday evening after sunset in the valley, where I had lost my way amid the numerous little hills and pathways, and brought me home. Soon after, he entered my house, sat down beside me, and said: "You are my son, and this house is not any longer mine but yours." — "He has spoken truly," said the son; "for the first time I saw Yakûb Bey, I felt for him all the attachment of a brother." I wished to know if the Circassians and the other mountaineers were now united, and if they sent each other reinforcements when wanted. In these respects, the young man says, they are as brothers, and go wherever necessity calls them; in proof of which he told me he has but lately returned from serving against the Russians on the banks of the Kûban. He reports, that the Russians have lately attempted establishing an agricultural colony near Anapa, under strong military protection; and that the Circassians have succeeded in capturing some of the cattle and implements belonging to it.

Wednesday, 26th.—My room appears to be now, occasionally, a favourite resort of the young ladies of my host's family and their visitors, who find attractions in my musical-box, and other curiosities and sweetmeats. One or other of the old gentlemen generally accompanies them. According to the custom of the country, this family has two boys boarded with it for their education. One of these, the son of a noble, arrived yesterday, and the other, about nine

years old, returns home shortly, having apparently completed his education; for he is modest and serviceable, an excellent rider, and said to be one of the best marksmen in the valley.

Owing to the absence of Hassan Bey—one of the most influential persons in this district, and already known to the English—the people here seem quite at a loss what to do with me. My presence, and my coming for their benefit, having become known, I have daily large levees; during which two or three of the elders have generally retired to the plateau to consult about my disposal, while the rest have embraced the opportunity of consulting me on all sorts of surgical and medical cases,—every Englishman being supposed to know everything. Among others, my fellow-passenger, Khamti, came to consult me about a gun-shot wound, in which he thinks a piece of his shirt-of-mail still remains. The result of the consultations of the elders is, that they have made arrangements among themselves to send me, at their expense, towards the north—whither they understand I wish to go—either by land or water; and Achmajan has volunteered to leave his goods in the charge of some friend here, and accompany me wherever I go, during the whole time I may remain in the country. My host's eldest and third sons express the same wish.

Pending these negotiations, I sent to see if the two nearest chiefs, Hassan of Khissa and Achmet of Vardan, were still from home. My messenger to the house of the latter met one of his people coming to me with the congratulations of his master on my

safe arrival, and an expression of his desire to see me. Meysûrbí, an elder of Khissa, sent me a similar message. Lastly, there arrived a letter from Achmet, signed by himself and three others, congratulating me on my arrival; excusing himself for not coming to see me, on the plea of business; and begging me to remove to his house. This invitation I was on the point of accepting, when a large party of the people, who had come here with the messenger, held, in his presence, a long debate on the subject, which at length terminated in their communicating to me, through Achmajan, who speaks Turkish well, their unanimous opinion, that it would be much more becoming for Achmet to come to me, than for me to go to him.

This decision annoyed me, as involving a further loss of time; yet it seemed necessary to comply with it; more particularly as it involved a question of national etiquette, and had been come to in the presence of the messenger; for my future position in the country must depend greatly on first impressions. Accordingly I wrote Achmet a note, thanking him for his politeness, and telling him I should be sorry to inconvenience him, but that I also was much engaged writing letters for England, to be despatched by the vessel I came in; that these would occupy me for another day or two, when I hoped it might be in his power to come and see me. Thus matters rest in the mean time. I think it right to give these details, as criterions for estimating the manners of the people, and their disposition toward Englishmen.

In a walk over one of the hills this morning, I

saw abundance of hazels, bramble-berries, wild rose, scented hawthorn just flowering, and deep beds of fern; nothing in short that struck me as differing essentially from the clothing of our own mountains, excepting the luxuriance of the vegetation. The climate is said to have neither heat nor cold in extremes. The dogs at the farm-houses appear to be of the very same breed as those of our hills, and they are equally inhospitable; but their masters do not participate in their surliness, for a peasant at one of these houses, where I asked my way, brought me back the greater part of it. It was well I had a good walk, for on my return I found a kid had been killed, which helped to furnish a genuine mountain-breakfast, the detail of which I shall give as a specimen of the abundance here; for I am with a family which, as I said, is considered to be but in moderate circumstances.

First, sweet cake and milk were served; then, on a clean wooden four-footed tray, a great mess of thick pasta, with a wooden bowl stuck in the midst, filled with a sauce of milk, walnut-oil, and capsicums; and around the pasta on the tray (for there are no plates) was arranged pieces of the boiled kid, from which one of the sons helped me to the tit-bits. Next came a large bowl of grape-syrup and water, which was handed me as a specific for the digestion of fat meat; then succeeded a bowl of milk with pasta mixed in it; and I was already more than breakfasted, when there was served a large bowl of excellent kid-broth, thickened with beans, &c., of which also I was obliged to taste. After me breakfasted

a Turkish stranger and my servant; after them the father of the family, who, before he began, handed two large pieces of the kid to his Russian serf, and then the sons took the remains to their own house to breakfast there.

Vardan, Thursday, 27th.—I had written so far yesterday, when Meysûrbí of Khissa, a very respectable-looking old man, was announced; and, upon my being introduced to him, he said he would, if I pleased, send horses next morning to carry myself, my servant, and luggage, to his hamlet; for which kind offer I thanked him, and made my acceptance of it conditional upon my messenger finding Achmet absent or at home. But the old gentleman had scarcely turned his back, when the other, who had attended our countryman Mr. S. throughout his journey the previous summer, was announced, and his frank, good-humoured manners and handsome and agreeable features prepossessed me at once in his favour. He came, numerously attended, to beg me to accompany him to his house; and although I had wished, before moving anywhere, to finish the letters I intended to send by the Turkish vessel, this prompt attention induced me to accept his offer, especially as he promised to send Meysûrbí intimation of my having done so, and to bring Ali Achmet, prince of Sûtsha, and other influential chiefs of the coast, to visit me. By distribution among the horses of his escort, he provided conveyance for all my luggage, which is still both bulky and ponderous. We had first to ford the river Sûbesh, which is so rapid, and was still so swoln by the late rain, that it re-

quired some management to get the loaded horses across in safety. We then took to the sea-beach, along which lay the remainder of our route—some sixteen miles. It was deep shingle all the way, but certainly preferable to any inland route, as we passed a continued range of hills, not of great elevation, but so multiform and steep, that a road over them must be both long and difficult. Meysûrbí and his attendants joined us on the beach. At intervals we had a peep, between the hillocks on the shore, into some beautiful little valley, the hills of which are cultivated almost to their summits. Khissa, especially, seemed to me a little paradise; and, on Meysûrbí bidding me good-bye and entering it, I could not but envy him. The great depth of excellent soil, displayed by the sections of the hillocks toward the beach, attested the fertility of the neighbouring country.

When we came within a few miles of Vardan, Achmet rode forward to make preparation for my reception; and on our entering his valley, equally beautiful with the others, one of his principal dependants turned round and bid me welcome to his territory.

The valley of Vardan is bordered by low hills, partly wooded and much cultivated, and is closed in toward the east by high and densely-wooded hills, the loftiest of which is still capped with snow. The thermometer at noon to-day stood at 58°. The guest-house was again assigned to me, a bond of brotherhood between our host and myself was entered into; and then a plentiful warm supper was

served. The clay walls of my house are still quite damp, and I think that the construction of it may have been the occupation which prevented my noble host from waiting upon me sooner.

My room is about thirty feet long by twelve broad, and in other respects the same as that which I occupied at Sûbesh, excepting that the roof appears to be waterproof; that it is otherwise better finished; that it has a small unglazed window, which may be closed by a shutter; and that the divan extends right across one end of it, with the fire-place immediately adjoining. The walls above the divan are hung with beautifully-wrought mats, and a line of closely placed wooden pegs extends round the room, for hanging up the arms of visitors. The divan is furnished with one of the choicest of the mats, and dark-coloured silken cushions, and my bed on it, last night, was unexceptionable, as I had a soft mattress bordered with velvet, velvet pillows, a quilted silk coverlet, and, better than all, clean white sheeting. The only other furniture in the room is a bench placed across the lower end, for young men and persons of inferior rank; while mats and cushions are ranged on the side opposite to that of the door, fire-place, and window, for the seniors and persons "of quality."

I was agreeably surprised this morning at seeing a handsome travelling tea-service (of which two gilt spoons formed a conspicuous part) taken out of a small chest, and at being made partaker of some excellent tea, which our liberal host dealt round so freely to all present that his stock of sugar was soon

expended. Luckily I had it in my power to supply the deficiency. This tea-service was found on board a Russian vessel captured by the Circassians. Achmet is a man of substance. He has no less than fifty-two persons on his establishment. He was the principal adventurer in freighting the Lord Charles Spenser, and his speculative turn seems as decided as ever.

Friday, 28th.—I was interrupted in my writing yesterday by an influx of visitors. Hassan Bey (brother of Hafiz Pasha) arrived early in the forenoon with a numerous train, and in the course of the day many other chiefs came in from various quarters. The park and the guest-house were completely thronged, and every peg in the former had its complement of arms. With the exception of Hassan Bey, who carried a bow, every man (every boy I might say) had a rifle. The best of these, I am told, come from a district called Karatshai, towards the head of the Kûban. The gunpowder is manufactured in the country: the nitre is extracted from a plant cultivated for the purpose.

It seems that war is anticipated here as well as in the north. The Russians are reported to have drawn together a force of 15,000 men at Sûkûm-Kaleh, where Baron Rosen is expected from Tiflis to take the command. It is expected that they will attempt a descent at Mamai, about ten miles to the south of where I now am, and where there are the ruins of a Genoese fort and excellent anchorage for large ships.

The Circassians apprehend no result from a descent at this point beyond the erection of a fort:

they say the country is so difficult that they would not fear an attempt to penetrate into it by a force of 100,000 Russians.

I am given to understand that throughout this north-western region of the Caucasus the combination of the tribes is complete. A permanent assembly of delegates is assembled in the neighbourhood of the Kûban. The policy of Russia confirms the old members of the league in their hostility, and drives new ones into its ranks. Hassan Bey declares that his only wish is to see the power of Russia broken before he dies. He has strong personal motives for this hatred. Some time ago he fell into the hands of the Russians, and they forced him—an independent and wealthy chief—to serve in their ranks as a common soldier for two years. A similar fate, Hassan tells me, has been awarded to hundreds of the princes and nobles of Daghestan who have fallen as prisoners into the hands of the Russians. Abdûllah Bey of Daghestan, who recently passed through this country, on his way from Constantinople, is expected to return soon with a deputation of his countrymen for the purpose of concerting measures with the Circassians against the Russians. The Azras, in the neighbourhood of Sûkûm-Kaleh (the *mirnié* or friends of the Russians), have been irritated by a demand for a contingent of recruits; and they, too, have made overtures for an alliance with the Circassians. One of the principal chiefs in the neighbourhood of Sûkûm, and one of his sons, hold nominal rank in the Russian army; yet he has just sent another of his sons into this part of

the country, in order that he may be out of the reach of Russian influence, and under the protection of Hassan Bey, the most inveterate enemy of the Russians. This young man brought fifteen serfs and a beautiful Georgian charger, as a present to Hassan Bey. He came to me with a message from the Bey, attended by another serf; and, so primitive are the manners here, I have just seen master and man eating at the same table.

Our visitors expressed the most lively satisfaction at my arrival; esteeming it an additional proof that the English were really taking an interest in their affairs, and were likely to do something for them.

After politics had been discussed we all adjourned into the park to see the paces and points of the Georgian steed, and to try my telescopes. Mats were provided for those who wished to say their prayers. We had a horse-race too; gained by a son of my host—a beautiful and gentle boy of twelve years. This young nobleman and I have become great friends, yet I could not succeed in inducing him to be seated on the divan beside me, even in the absence of company, so habitual is the respect for strangers and seniority! I have been much struck by the number of fine-looking men assembled. Their characteristics are, lofty stature; great breadth of chest and brawniness of shoulder; a thin flank; a small foot, and keen lively eyes. It may justly be said here, "Man is the noblest growth this realm supplies." I cannot yet speak much from observation of the women.

After sunset and prayers, we had some meat and

pasta. Just as the conversation grew languid, and we were dozing round the embers of a great wood fire, my attention was roused by something like music from the distant and shaded extremity of the room. It was the singing of a boy about four years old, accompanied by that of the man between whose knees he stood. What the words of the song were I knew not, but they soon roused all the rest of our large party and produced among it much laughter. To this succeeded a singular, yet very exciting quartett of men's voices. It was at times a sort of fugue, but I never heard anything resembling it, especially the occasional bass accompaniment. The copyright would be valuable in England, yet merely as a musical curiosity, for it was but as the wailing of infant music, though the subject was the deeds of men—a battle fought lately against the Russians.

When the performance was finished, another, much longer, and more extraordinary, was begun by a tall, lank, hare-brained-looking personage (our host's brother-in-law), who had sat dozing and roasting close by the fire. He sang, in a falsetto voice, a very rapid recitation, and every few minutes three or four others, who sat behind in the shade, contributed a few fine tenor and bass notes, like the swell and fall of an organ. This long recitation recounted the charms of an extraordinary beauty of the Zazi-okû family, and the numerous suitors she had rejected. It is in great vogue, although the heroine is now married.

Thus passed our evening, till about half-past ten o'clock, when a plentiful supper was served, with

abundance of wine (or brandy, for those whose *religious* scruples made them prefer it), and about midnight, mats and bedding were brought in and laid on the floor for Hassan Bey and some eight or ten other chiefs, while they insisted on my retaining the whole of the divan. No titles are used here in conversation: even dependants address their chiefs by what we call their christian names, and, as I have shown, occasionally eat with their sons; yet perfect respect is never wanting. Invariably when a chief, or even small proprietor, enters a room, every one makes a movement of rising. If elderly, they rise entirely, and remain erect till he be seated.

I have omitted to mention a remarkable honour paid me by our host yesterday evening. After prayers he and some witnesses (my dragoman among others) went to one of the out-houses where Achmet, with his own hand, sacrificed a bullock, in ratification of the bond of brotherhood between us, and I am told that I am now to be considered, in every respect, as one of his family, whom they are bound, as such, to esteem and protect. And a fine set of brothers—in addition to you in Britain—I see I have gotten; for three of the five have been here to see me, and they appear very pleasant and clever men—all speaking Turkish fluently. One of them has consulted me about his face, which has become blotched, in consequence of his having rubbed it with snow when he was overheated. I hope my gentle prescription may be followed by his cure; it has a very hale constitution on its side. Here, as at Sûbesh, I see I might if I pleased immediately enter on an extensive medical and surgical practice.

I have heard the nightingale this evening for the first time. Her placid song forms a pleasing contrast to the wild cries of the jackal in the adjoining forests.

Saturday, 29th.—The time for action has arrived, and I must bring this long and, I fear rambling, letter to a conclusion, in the hope that you will make all allowance for the constant inconvenience and disturbance amidst which it has been written.

Yesterday Hassan Bey and his numerous suite set forth for his present residence, about four hours' ride to the south of this place, having first arranged that this morning, if the weather were better, (it rained much yesterday, and pours at present,) I should pay him a visit, when he would procure the attendance of Beislam, Alibí, and other chiefs to the southward, and take me to see old Ali Achmet Bey, of Sûtsha, who is ailing. He promised also to procure me all the information in his power about the projected expedition of the Russians, and he expressed a hope that my presence just now would encourage his countrymen in their preparations to repel it.

In the evening a very tall, strongly-built young man, with an acute expression of face, arrived alone, entered my room, and seated himself (at my sign for him to do so) so modestly, that—still Europeanised—I supposed he might be some inferior person. But I soon learned that he was Ali of Jûbghe, one of the brothers Zazi-okû (of the noble Sept Karzek) who had received and entertained Mr. S—— with much kindness; and that he had been accompanied, as far

as Sûbesh, by five other influential individuals, who had come with him as a deputation to me from the northern provinces, where my arrival had been heard of, and had caused the greatest satisfaction and encouragement. Ali stated that they had immediately despatched couriers to notify it in the more distant parts of the country. This step was necessary, because in these less-informed districts, a report had been spread, upon the Vixen's arrival, that a great English vessel was off the coast, loaded with cannon, powder, &c.; and the subsequent report of her capture they looked upon as a proof that the Russians were not afraid even of the English. The consequence had been great discouragement. This, he said, the knowledge of my arrival had already to a considerable extent removed, and my presence in the north "would make them as lions."

For these reasons, he begged that I would proceed there as soon as possible; for the Russians had taken the field, and the Circassians had already had three desperate engagements with them, in two of which they had been successful. His associates had remained at Sûbesh, and sent him forward to see me and learn my movements, as they did not, they said, like to trespass upon the hospitality of Achmet —perhaps there may be other motives. I wished to set out immediately with this party toward the north; but I found they had no horses, having come by sea; and although that would be my easiest way, a journey by land will have, it is said, a more beneficial effect in exciting the people.

Hassan and Achmet have both promised to furnish

me horses and an escort; but they are as urgent for me to remain here, and encourage the people, as Ali and his friends are for my presence in the north. Hassan and Achmet argue that if another Englishman be so soon expected, it will be best that one should be in the north and another here. But Mr. L—— had not arrived when Ali set out; and, in the north there is actual warfare, while here it is but expected. I have therefore determined to leave this in a few days.

I presented Ali with a handsome English sabre for his assiduity in having travelled night and day, and as a proof to his friends of my arrival, which some of them doubted. He has returned to Sûbesh with an inhabitant of this valley, to learn whether his friends purpose coming here, or will be content with my promise to set out in a few days for the north. Meanwhile I must finish my letters, in order to send them to Jûbghe by this deputation. They may be sent thence by another, which proceeds forthwith to Constantinople, to inform Daûd Bey of the present posture of the affairs of the country, and has only been delayed until the nature of my mission was ascertained.

Ali was lately a prisoner in the hands of the Russians, who wished to give him a high rank in their service, and make him the medium of corrupting his countrymen. For this purpose they sent him home, well supplied with money, and then employed a spy to see what he had effected. He got their emissary put to death; and when they, in revenge, attacked his échelle with nine vessels and a

large land force, he and his brothers, aided by the people of the neighbourhood, made use of two cannons and powder they had brought from Trebizond on purpose, and repulsed them from their shore with considerable slaughter. He was also lately surrounded near the Kûban, almost alone, by some twenty Russians, with whom he fought for some time, after having received seven wounds; yet he eventually succeeded in making his escape, and in carrying prisoner with him a sub-officer, whom he still retains. Achmet says, that among themselves he is considered a very extraordinary man, as indeed his Herculean form must make him in any country.

I have just been interrupted by a very substantial dinner, one incident of which I may notice as quite characteristic. A tumbler of wine was presented me, and, on my declining it, it was handed to the most ragged elderly serf who stood by, and to whom two of those who were seated at table handed at the same time some of the food they were eating; after which a second tumbler of wine was given him. Our host's young son helps to serve all who eat in the guest-house—both chiefs and their dependants. Serfs, I am told, cannot be sold without their own consent; and if their master ill-use them, they have the privilege of leaving him and choosing another. They consider it an advantage to be sold to the Turks, especially those of Constantinople, which, of course, is looked upon in this country as the great city. Hence the strong desire, especially among the females, to be sent there to try their fortune.

These details are endless, and I must defer them

till another opportunity, lest the messenger return for my letters; but it rains very heavily, and I fear that the rivers are become impassable. My health is excellent, amid all the late bad weather and stinting of exercise. When these matters are remedied, I have hopes of acquiring a Circassian constitution, as I am already almost weather-proof.

Sunday, 30th.—This day began beautifully; and as the month of rain is now at an end, I hope the rain may be so also. Yesterday evening a person arrived from the neighbourhood of Sûkûm, and confirmed the previous intelligence of the Russians having created great irritation among the Azras, by having demanded recruits from them. The messenger returned late last night from Sûbesh, and said that he was nearly being carried away by that river. The deputation pass this day there, and then return to Jûbghe; I must therefore close and despatch this. Oh these medical cases! I have just had a visit from my host's sister-in-law, to consult me about pains in her back, &c.; and she brought with her another indisposed female, to participate in the supposed benefits of my advice.

* * * * * *

Evening.—Although very desirous, and doing all in my power, to leave this place to-day, in order to keep my appointment with the chiefs to the southward, and then proceed toward Sûdjûk-kaleh, I find it impossible to depart before to-morrow, as Achmet says he sent all the horses to the hills to graze when the rain began yesterday, and that he cannot get them back sooner. It may be so; but his cha-

racter now appears to me a little *bizarre*, and I cannot help thinking that I am detained, either to postpone my departure for the north, or in order that he may have time to work out of me some articles among my presents he has set his heart upon. It seems to me that he gives, and expects others to give, with equal thoughtless liberality. I have had some small proofs of each,—in his giving at once to his brother, at his request, his sabre, and a handsome suit of clothes he wore; and in his demanding each morning from me—besides many little articles among my stock of presents, few of which I have refused him — a supply from my limited stock of sugar, which, with tea, he serves round lavishly to his guests and retainers, as if we had a grocery shop in the neighbourhood. He appears to enjoy the entire attachment of his dependants, while living among them with much familiarity; and he personifies completely my ideas of a gallant partisan-captain. His brothers and he possess the character of the most dauntless intrepidity. On his showing me some tolerable white wine, I asked what might be its value. He replied that he did not know—that when the wine in any house was finished, they sent and got a supply from a neighbour.

LETTER III.

TRANSIENT VISIT TO THE SOUTHERN CHIEFS, AND JOURNEY NORTHWARD.

Sûtcha, *Tuesday, 2nd May.*

My dear ——. — You may think my narrative too full of minute details. My motive in not omitting to record anything, however trifling in itself, is that I suspect when I become more accustomed to the manners of this country, and when my attention is occupied with more important matters, many little traits which serve to illustrate the character of the natives will escape my notice. I have therefore resolved to omit nothing. If you really desire to know this people, you will not be annoyed at my determination.

Yesterday morning, after an early breakfast, I set out for this place, accompanied by Achmet, his son, and some of his people. Our road, as formerly, lay along the beach. During the first hour's ride, there is a narrow tract of rolling ground, rich and cultivated, between the sea and the hills. Afterwards the cliffs approach close to the sea. On rounding a small promontory, the beautiful bay of Mamai opened to view. It seemed clothed with trees to the water's edge, with wooded hills of various forms rising inland, and behind these a line of peaked and snow-clad mountains (part of the great range, stretching toward Gaghra, where they terminate). In the present circumstances of the country, I could

not but look with great satisfaction towards that vast barrier to invasion.

The bay of Mamai had been repeatedly spoken of to me as an excellent and safe harbour for large ships; but it did not appear to be one in which they could long remain with safety, as the angle is much too obtuse. It faces toward the south-west. I have, however, since been assured that the anchorage-ground is so good, and the sea-winds blow home with so little force (owing to the height of the hills a little way inland), that large vessels can remain there without any danger. This is the reason why the Circassians apprehend an attack upon this part of the coast, similar to that which was inflicted upon the territory of Beislam of Ardler, of which I shall speak presently.

Passing the headland mentioned above, I found the shingle of the beach almost covered with large fragments of variegated sand-stone, fragments of a portion of the hill which hung over us, crested with luxuriant trees, which had been undermined by the sea. The strata thus laid bare were numerous and placed at a slightly inclined angle, above which the soil appeared deep and rich. We then came to the river Terampse, the largest, after the Sûbesh, of any I have seen on this coast. It appeared too deep for fording at its mouth; we therefore left the beach, and following a pathway through the forest on the banks of the stream, soon came in sight of a magnificent landscape—a rich valley (though not of great extent) in the midst of which towers a lofty cone-shaped hill, many of the adjacent hills having the

same, or yet more striking forms, all clothed with luxuriant forest, while a ridge of snowy peaks glittered in the distance. This valley, stream, and hills, form together one of those masterpieces of nature, which even painting can scarcely represent. The natives were busy tilling the soil—a deep dark loam —with flat arrow-shaped ploughshares that only scratched the surface; the handles, too, are almost perpendicular, and consequently so short that the ploughman has but little power.

On returning to the beach, a precipitous bank succeeded, of eighty to ninety feet in elevation, which, with the exception of a few strata of stones, appeared an entire mass of soil, an immense block of which had been undermined by the sea, and lay with all its trees in ruin on the beach, obliging us to wade round the projection it had formed. It consists chiefly of a stiff blue clay, which another crop of trees was already about to cover. Beyond this ruin I saw some blocks of compact masonry lying on the beach, and looking upwards, discovered amid the foliage traces of a long solid wall. I was told that these were the remains of a Genoese fortress, and that there are inscriptions on some of the stones, which I purpose inspecting when I return from the north.

The precipitous shore was succeeded by rolling ground, covered with gigantic forest, except at one point, to which I was conducted, and informed that here the descent of the Russians was expected to be made. It was a small grassy plateau at the termination of the valley or rather glen of Psikha, or Mamai.

Along the face of this plateau, and up a portion of the higher shore to the south-east, the Circassians have constructed six or eight rude, yet not inefficient breastworks. Some of them consist of a double row of strong stakes, driven into the ground and compactly hurdled together, the interval being filled with stones and earth, above which are placed large trees to protect the heads of the tirailleurs, while space enough is left beneath for their rifles. Others are mere ditches for the warriors to stand in, with a log laid in front for their further protection, with notches all along for their rifles.

On leaving Mamai we again took to the shore, but soon turned to the left and entered a wood of most magnificent beeches. The pathway eastward through this forest was deep with mire, and traversed such rugged ravines, barred by fallen trees, that it seemed to me well that I was mounted on a Circassian horse unused to the luxuries of a turnpike-road. Half-an-hour of such riding sufficed to bring us to a small hamlet surrounded by a strong fence and situated on the slope of a beautiful green hill. Here Hassan Bey resides at present, while his houses at Khissa are undergoing repairs. He received me with great cordiality. The guest-house, though similar to the others in arrangement, is small, inconvenient, and badly finished; but Hassan and our host have prepared me a most comfortable divan, on which I was seated but a short time when a plentiful hot repast, with abundance of wine and brandy, was served up.

A great valley to the eastward having been men-

tioned during the repast, I expressed a wish to see it; and at the close, Hassan took me to the top of a small hill in the neighbourhood, whence I had a magnificent and beautiful panoramic view. To the north-west were green hills decked with hamlets, the forest of giant beeches and a glimpse of the ocean, converted at the moment, by the setting sun, into a sheet of burnished gold; to the south-east, lay the valley of the Sûtsha with its silvery stream, its luxuriant pastures, vineyards, orchards and hamlets, girt closely by hills apparently quite as fertile, above which rose others more densely wooded, until walled in by the rugged masses of the central range, with their glittering mantles of snow. A conical hill, just beyond the Sûtsha, was pointed out to me as the boundary of the territory of the Adighes or Circassians; and a hill was shown to the north-eastward, in the vicinity of which iron had recently been found. I was told also that, on the opposite side of the Sûtsha, was a cold spring strongly impregnated with sulphur. The valley appeared to me to have been brought into good condition by being cleared of enough of its timber to admit of cultivation and grazing for the support of the numerous hamlets in and around it; but I was told that many inhabitants of the district (they are estimated at 5000) were leaving it and moving towards Mamai, for the sake of a greater supply of wood—such is the profusion with which it is consumed and the difficulty of transport in this neighbourhood.

I have had a good deal of conversation with Hassan Bey (who appears better informed than any person

I have yet seen) on the conditions and prospects of his country, which he admits to be much in want of good government. He argues that at first, at least, its chief should be an Englishman, at all events a foreigner, who could rule with some severity in order to bring the inhabitants—especially those toward the south—into habits of greater regularity. I agreed with him to a certain extent, but expressed a hope that they might find means of improving and strengthening their self-government.

I have been much vexed to find an Armenian from Tiflis, of a very sinister expression of countenance, on terms of great familiarity with all here; so that my endeavours to keep him apart from our conversations were often got the better of through his intrusiveness or their facility. According to his own account he has, in the course of a few years, realised about £2000 out of the generosity of these people—in the following extraordinary manner:—Every three or four months he goes into the Russian dominions or to Constantinople (where the Russians are almost equally paramount), and purchases a stock of goods which he distributes in presents among his friends here. After allowing some time to elapse, he waits upon each object of his generosity, and demands a present in return, which, he says, is always of much greater value than what he gave. Latterly he has, in company with a Mussulman, begun to purchase young ladies for Constantinople, and has now eight of these, waiting his departure. This departure shall not, if I can help it, take place soon. I have had a long conversation with Hassan Bey

upon the folly of permitting this person, in the present posture of affairs, to pass and repass to the Russian or Turkish territory, where, doubtless, one who drives such a trade as he does, makes a trade also of the information he acquires regarding the state of Circassia, and thus obtains permission to violate the Russian sanitary laws. Hassan has promised to have him detained in the mean while; but I fear that the cunning of the Armenian may get the better of the distrust I have endeavoured to create among his confiding friends.

The family-house here is at a very short distance from that allotted for guests—only a slight hurdle screen intervenes. I have had only a dim and occasional glimpse of the ladies yet. But they have sent me a specimen in Hassan's daughter, a lively girl of four years, very smartly dressed in orange-coloured muslin turban, trousers, and vest, with wide white sleeves, gaily flowered with silk and golden threads.

Hassan told me that his family was originally from Turkey, and that he has no pretension to be ranked among the native chiefs, although his fortune may bear comparison with that of most of them. I have seen some evidence that it is substantial. Yesterday evening we had tea and refined sugar in a service of gilt china,—a handsome brass urn supplying the water. An abundant supper of excellent Turkish cookery succeeded, and was graced by handsome ivory-handled knives and forks, and massive plated candlesticks, as well as very passable native white wine, and still better native brandy, both of which were lavishly circulated among the numerous guests.

And in return for some presents I made him and his lady, he has forced upon me (for, thinking of the Armenian, I really felt unwilling to accept anything) a Georgian priming-horn and cartouche-box, hung by ten massive chains, with chased and gilt plates of silver; praying me, at the same time, to return and spend as long time as I pleased with him at his house at Khissa, which, he assures me, I shall find more commodious than the one he is at present lodged in. The latter truly accords ill with the things I have just mentioned, as it is a very humble thatched, hurdle-clayed cot. He has, moreover, shown me a saddle covered with Russian leather and chased silver-gilt ornaments, and a bridle as gaily decked, forming one of *fifteen* similar sets, which, with a like number of horses, he is about to present to the Azra chief whose son brought him the Georgian steed and fifteen serfs.

Haji, Thursday, 4th May.—Early on Tuesday morning, while we were at breakfast, old Ali Achmet, the prince of Sûtsha, whom I have mentioned above, arrived by appointment to see me. It would have been bad manners in him, notwithstanding his rank, to have interrupted my breakfast, so he had his served *al fresco*, on a grassy hillock. After the usual compliments, I communicated to him the object of my present visit to the country, which he learned with great satisfaction, and then expressed a strong hope that England might soon interfere in their favour, as this long-continued war pressed very hardly upon them. He said, (Hassan Bey previously made the same remark,) England and the other powers of Europe had interfered in behalf of Greece,

(Russia, be it always remembered, having been the instigator,) although that country had not fought for its liberty a quarter of the time that Circassia had. "The Russians," he added, "cannot conquer this country: they may, by means of their ships and cannon, possess themselves of some more points on our coast; but granting they could gain the whole of it, that shall make no difference in our determination to resist to the last; for if they gain these hills, we will retire," said the old chief, pointing eastward, "to these snowy mountains and fight them." I gave him what hope I could of England becoming sensible of the justice of their claim, exhorting him to keep up the courage of his countrymen in the mean while, and then begged him to excuse my present hurried visit to this part of the country, as my chief errand was to the actual seat of war in the north.

I was next requested to prescribe for the old gentleman, which I did to the best of my knowledge; but I fear my directions will not be observed, as they consisted chiefly of restrictions on his food and drink, an over-indulgence in which I thought the cause of his ailment. On bidding him farewell, I presented him (at Hassan's suggestion), on account of his public spirit, with an English double-barrelled fowling-piece, with which, I am told, he was much gratified. This is the chief who is mentioned (in the Portfolio) as having been offered a large sum of money by the Russians if he would allow an army to pass unmolested along the shore. He took the money, distributed it among his neighbours, and then assembling

a body of Circassians, drove the Russians back with great carnage.

After this interview, I set out from Sûtsha on my return to Vardan, escorted by Hassan and Achmet, their sons and dependants, and we formed when we debouched on the beach a gallant-looking and lively cavalcade. At intervals, some of the party (chiefs, as well as others) started forward in a horse-race, during which if any one chanced to lose his bonnet, another behind instantly fired his pistol or rifle at it. I admired particularly the despatch with which Achmet's young son unslung, uncovered, and discharged his rifle at the fallen bonnet of one but a very short distance before him, both being at the moment at full gallop. Hassan Bey elevated his bonnet on the point of his sabre as a mark for the rifle of some one on horseback behind him. In short, the use of their fire-arms *en route* is almost incessant, and seems to prove that here, at least, there is no scarcity of gunpowder.

I learn that, last year, not long before the time of Mr. S——'s arrival, the Circassians, in three parties of about one hundred and fifty each, attacked and stormed the fort of Gaghra, killing or making prisoners of the garrison. As they returned, after this exploit, carrying their dead and wounded in their boats, some Russian vessels, with troops on board, approached to attack the *échelle* of Beislam Bey at Ardler. But the Circassians, intrenched behind fortifications similar to those I have described at Mamai, repelled them without the loss of a single man, while the Russians lost in killed and wounded about seventy.

At Mamai we again rested a while, and again made trial of the paces of the Georgian steed, which Hassan Bey appears to have always led about with him unmounted. He says he purposes sending it to Constantinople as a present to Daûd Bey, whose name and character seem universally known to the men and even boys of this country. Here, too, we had an inspection of sword-blades, about which the Circassians seem as curious as my friend Mr. B. about Cremonas; and some of those shown appeared to me (though little of a virtuoso) genuine Toledos, especially Achmet's, which had quite a silvery lustre, and a Spanish cavalier and "*Ad majorem gloriam Dei*" engraved upon it. Another had also a Spanish cavalier, a dedication to God [what reflections these blasphemies suggest!] and "Anno 1664." The antiquity of the blade was further attested by its being worn, like Burns's pen, "to the gristle."

Yesterday morning, I wished to have left Vardan early: but Achmet seemed so unwilling to furnish me with the means of setting out, that I considered myself fortunate when, about midday, Hasesh, one of the deputies from the North (who had determined to wait and take me with them), and my energetic friend Achmajan, arrived and enabled me to depart. We reached this lovely valley about an hour before sunset, and there found Kehri-kû Shamuz, another of the deputies, who had been on his way to Vardan to seek me, but had been obliged to stop by sickness. He is a tall, spare, well-formed old gentleman, with a beard white as the snow, an ample forehead, a keen hazel eye, and a lively yet somewhat sarcastic ex-

pression of countenance. His dress consists of white cotton anteri and pantaloons, a dark brown surtout trimmed with silver lace, and a cap of black lamb's wool. He is, I understand, one of the most influential of the noble and powerful sept Tshûpako. He begged me to doctor him, which I did, and I had immediately other applications on the part of our host, his wife, and friend; but that incurable malady, old age, seemed their only ailment. A loose tooth was one of the cases!

The valley of Haji is about a mile long, of an oblong shape, stretching from south to north, and terminated in the latter direction by several high cone-shaped hills, wooded to their summits. As I approached them, after having passed a deal of very well-ploughed (and cross-ploughed, hoed, and raked) land—entered upon a meadow enclosed by substantial fences, graced by many stately walnut-trees, and intersected by the clear and rapid Haji—and saw, on my left, a wood of standard trees for the support of most luxuriant vines—I could not help imagining that at the base of these hills I should find the stately mansion of the fortunate proprietor of this "happy valley." Proceeding further, I espied, at the foot of the hills, a small green paddock enclosed by an inner fence, and having, on one side, three very tidy clay cottages and some out-houses. Everything I have seen convinces me that the proprietor, however far behind him of Holkham, is, in these parts, the first of rural economists. Soon after our arrival, the ladies sent to the guest-house a bowl of nuts, walnuts, chesnuts, and raisins, to amuse us till the

hour of supper arrived; and a good substantial supper it proved when it came.

Sûbesh, Thursday Evening.—We left Haji this morning after an early and excellent breakfast, and were escorted out of the valley by our kind old host and about twenty of his neighbours. On arriving here, I found Khadir and his vessel both snugly berthed, the former in a compactly-wattled hut constructed expressly for him and his men, and the schooner close at hand shored high and dry. Khadir has found that the Russian gunners aimed better than I gave them credit for, as they struck his vessel six times—twice in the sails, twice in the cordage, and two shots grazed the stern. Old Khadir, to do him justice, stood manfully to his helm throughout the chase; and latterly his sailors—especially Osman, the mate and chaplain—behaved very well.

Achamish Hadji Ali, a very fine-looking old man, arrived from the south, a little ago, to pay his respects to me. The attendants, as usual, ran and relieved him of his arms. When he entered, I rose and shook hands with him, and then motioning for him to be seated on the divan, on the opposite side of the fire, showed him the example by seating myself. I thought, from his lack of silver trimming, that he might not be of the nobility, and that this was the cause of his backwardness in accepting my offer; or, that, as a stranger, custom entitled me to be first seated. But herein I committed a breach of manners; for although a greater stranger here than the old man, and although ranked in the estimation of the people above their highest nobles, it was not

sufficient that I showed him a seat; I ought to have remained standing until he accepted it, as old men, of whatever rank, have here always this respect paid them. This lesson has been given me by Zazi-okû Ali, whom I have requested to instruct me in what I am still ignorant of the manners of the country. He gave me an opportunity of making this request by apologising for the inferiority of Circassian manners in comparison with those of England!*

My servant has just informed me that the chiefs from the north having learned the particulars of Achmet's behaviour, which they think has been wanting in respect and attention, are quite furious against him, and that they propose to send a man to reproach him and demand restitution of what presents I may have given him; as they fear much, if I report his conduct to Daûd Bey, the English may change their opinion of the Circassians generally. They say he was known before to be a man of bad character, and that it was most unlucky that I fell into his hands. I have sent to allay their fears about the English condemning all for the faults of one, and to prevent any further explosion of their friendly wrath. Achmet has deceived and annoyed me greatly; but I must bide my time for showing my opinion of his conduct, and acquire, in the mean while, greater insight into the motives by which both he and those in whose hands I now am are actuated.

* Those who have travelled in the East will know the value of any hint in regard to manners—an ignorance of which will mar the influence of any one, however well disposed and well qualified he may otherwise be.

On our arrival here, we found the sea too high to admit of our proceeding immediately by the boat which had brought the deputies, especially as there are fourteen persons, besides luggage, to go by her. After having waited on the shore about an hour to see if the wind would abate, it was resolved that we must adjourn for the night to the hamlet in which the deputies have lodged while here. We set out on foot, as the horses we had from Haji had been returned; and I could not but admire the energy of old Kehri-kû, who, unwell as he still is, set off to catch a horse, which was feeding in a field we passed through, for me to ride upon. Of course I prevented him. Our path lay up a valley (or rather glen) immediately to the north of that in which I lived when here before. So narrow is it, that from the height on which this hamlet is perched, it seems as if I could leap in half-a-dozen springs from the one hill-foot to the other. Between them a sparkling rivulet brawls through bright green pastures to the sea, of which the intervening hills allow only a glimpse.

Friday, 5th.—I fear we may be detained here by the illness of old Shamuz, who has caught fever and ague from getting wet and sleeping in an open shed upon the shore; and, so little experience has he of disease, that I cannot prevail on him to use precaution, and to refrain from going out, dressed only in his cottons, during the cold winds and thunder-showers we have had this morning. He has taken my medicines, but does not trust to them alone; for he drew from his pocket a small bunch of slips of paper, with texts of the Koran written on them, and

gathering together some embers of the fire, placed upon them a couple of the papers, and, with the bed-clothes gathered over his head, had it well fumigated with devotion.

Mesgahu, Saturday, 6th.—I had not finished the above paragraph, about being detained by the illness of Shamuz, when there was a call to embark; and before I had time to express my fear about the imprudence of his putting to sea in an open boat in his state of health in such weather, he had set out the first of all.

We embarked about mid-day. The wind was from the southward of east, and came down the glens we passed in such squalls, as obliged us to dispense altogether with our largest sail (the boom of which, on this coast of forests, was heaved overboard), and to keep a good look-out upon the other. There was not, it is true, much danger of capsizing; for, in addition to our party of fourteen, there was the merchandize of one of the passengers from Sinope, whom Ali knew and good-naturedly accommodated. But there was great risk, had the sea continued to rise, from our gunwale being within about nine inches of the water. We kept close in-shore, lest we should be swamped before we could reach it, if any accident happened.

During two hours' sailing (at the rate of about four miles per hour), we passed hills terminating abruptly on the beach, much wooded, and partially cultivated. About two P.M. we approached what had appeared from a distance to be a long low promontory, but which proved to be but a tract of the

coast, between the hills and the sea, which, in the course of time, may have been reduced to its present level by the large stream Waïa, whose impetuosity was indicated by the precipitous and lofty hills that close up its glen towards the east. Before arriving here, we had to land four of our people to lighten the boat, as she began to ship seas. We had also some very heavy showers, after which the sky cleared, and the wind getting more to the southward, I enjoyed the view of the coast exceedingly; for although the rowing, even with the most favourable wind, was almost incessant, it called forth no sympathy for the rowers, as it seemed rather amusement than labour to these sinewy, energetic Circassians, who sung, almost without intermission, (to the leading of their captain, Ali,) a great variety of their beautiful rowing chants. But this measured handling of their oars was repeatedly interrupted by bursts of enthusiastic labour, amid screams, and a sort of mad-like laughter.

After passing Waïa, the hills become less wooded, and apparently less fertile (though still at least equally cultivated), and continue so for the next twelve or fourteen miles. At half-past four we passed a river called Ashe; at a little after five, another called Makupse (both small streams, especially the latter); and at half-past six, word was given for running the boat ashore, at the mouth of a third small stream, called Shepse. But with the surf then breaking on the beach, and our still heavy lading, this was a matter of no small difficulty, and called forth our noble captain's mettle and stentorian

voice to order it aright. One of the lively young "ghillies" (all of whom had stripped for the task) leaped overboard as soon as we approached the breakers, and, swimming through them, was ready to direct the stem of the boat when it approached. In short, all got well to land but myself, whom, by way of most honouring, they mounted on the shoulders of one of the men, before we were far enough in for him to be able to stand steadily; in consequence of which he broke down under me, and I had to wade ashore in my jack-boots as I best could. And here was no cheerful hostelry-fire to dry oneself at. Owing to this coast-warfare, the dwellings are all at a distance from the sea. Here, however, and indeed wherever Turkish vessels come, two substantial open wooden sheds are erected, for the immediate accommodation of passengers and goods. Of these two sheds we now took possession,—we of the quarter-deck and our things being deposited in one, and the rowers, with the kitchen furniture, in the other. Two immense fires of drift-wood (which is abundant along the whole shore) were soon blazing between us, over one of which the immense pasta-cauldron was slung; and on this pasta (without even salt to season it), a morsel of hard white cheese, and a veritable soupe-maigre of Turkey corn and haricots, we made our simple yet hearty supper; and if you had better dishes that evening in London, perhaps I had the better appetite!

I am sorry to find that, in addition to Shamuz, another elderly chief,—Navrûz, uncle of Ali, and one of the deputies, whom I had not seen till embark-

ing,—has also been seized by fever, owing to the same cause. This is the end of the rainy season, and, from what I have heard, I infer that fever prevails much during its continuance.

The process of getting to bed was a very simple matter. The sick chiefs stretched themselves on the ground beside the fire, the more ailing of the two with the merchant's mat beneath him; and Shamuz wrapt in his felt cloak. My remonstrances regarding this and other matters (such as his wading into the sea to help the boat ashore) avail nothing; the old chief replies, "I am a soldier, and young yet, though my beard be white." And a most gallant and active warrior they say he is—always among the foremost wherever the Russians present themselves. I have learned here with regret, that Alibí of Semez, one of the very best chiefs for courage and conduct in the war on the Kûban, and for whom one of my choicest presents was destined, has been killed lately. When he fell, his son, a youth of fourteen, who was fighting by his side, dismounted to carry off his father's body; but the Russian cavalry, with their sabres, soon stretched him beside it. His loss is said to be severely felt throughout the north.

By daylight this morning we arose from our earthen and wooden couches, and after eating some of the cold pasta and some hard-boiled eggs (brought by a person of the neighbourhood who had discovered by the fires overnight that there were some strangers on the beach), we again launched our boat and started from Shepse about half-past six. In little more than an hour we arrived opposite a large bay and valley, called

Toapse. This is said to be a populous and wealthy neighbourhood. From beyond Makupse the hills have again become woody and fertile. We found in the bay of Toapse one of Hassan Bey's three vessels which he employs in trading to Constantinople. It had but lately arrived, and we saw the Circassians on shore busily carrying away its goods in waggons.

To the west of Toapse is a promontory of about half a mile, named Aguadshe, which must prove a gem to any geologist who visits it. Its strata are at all sorts of angles, and some of them vertical. The outer rocks form a basin in which a little hill is contained; while at the northern base of the promontory are some rocks with the sides of their strata to the sea (instead of having their edges, like all the rest, southward); and a large portion of one of these had, at a distance, the appearance of well-wrought hurdle-work. This part of the coast is said to be, at particular seasons, the resort of millions of fishes. Our rowers, on passing it, struck up an animated song to the "king of the fishes," in which Ali and others joined. Here too is said to harbour, in the caves of the rocks, an animal they called "the bear of the sea." From the description, it does not appear to be the seal; but what it really is I cannot yet find out.

In the forests which clothe the greater portion of all the hills within eye-range, the oak appeared to predominate; but in this neighbourhood the walnut tree is said to abound. As for boxwood—of which, it is said, the coast to the southward can furnish almost unlimited supplies of the very finest quality—the region of its production terminates near Waïa.

About half-past nine we passed another small bay called Nibû; and an hour afterwards, five of us, among whom was old Shamuz, landed for the purpose of walking to lighten the boat. Our walk at first lay along the beach, and then struck off among the hills and woods (almost all fine oak), where the paths became so steep and deep with mire, that it was with no small gratification we accepted the loan of the horses of Khamti (one of the Sinope passengers), whom we overtook. At twelve o'clock we again came in sight of the sea, and found our boat beached in this small creek, and our merchant in despair at the sea having spoiled his goods, which he was spreading on the shingle to dry.

Jûbghe, Monday, 8th.—We made a merry Saturday night of it at Mesgahu. We had not intended to stop there, as the hamlets are remote from the shore; but the heavy sea made further progress dangerous. Ali, who is full of life and activity, set forth, almost immediately on landing, to find the habitations of the natives and cater for us; and in process of time he returned, accompanied by a troop of men and boys, with a goat, milk, honey, &c., which furnished forth a most abundant and excellent repast; and by the time it was ready, our "ghillies," who are as expert in wood-craft as any Kentuckian, had erected two sylvan booths, and covered them with our sails. The two sick chiefs occupied one of these, and we who were hale the other; while two immense fires blazed in the space between us, and tempered the chilliness of the evening sea-breeze. A third, the kitchen fire, with couches of grass and fern, fur-

nished all the accommodation required by our hardy boatmen.

Before supper, however, two events occurred which, though not exactly of equal importance, seem both to deserve mention:—The first was the shaving of my head, for the purpose of making me look less outlandish, at the request of two of the chiefs, and by the hands of one of them—no despicable barber; the second, the incidental mention by Ali that a considerable quantity of iron had been made on the other side of a small hill, which borders the little creek on which we are (as the Americans say) "camped out." Though it was almost dark, I immediately set out to examine the stone, of which I found abundant specimens near the surface of a loose black soil. The specimens appeared to me very ponderous and rich in metal. This iron bed is deposited in a basin of what appeared to me to be red sand-stone. From the converging dip of the rocks where they appear on the opposite sides of the bed, I infer that they meet below the iron-stone, and that this deposit rests upon the sand-stone.

After supper — which we discussed amid a great gathering of servitors and spectators — I began to think how the remainder of the evening was to be got through, and was pleased to see a circle formed, preparatory for some amusement. First, there was a measured clapping of hands; then succeeded a few low notes, which gradually swelled into a lively tune, joined in by most of those standing around; and at length one of the wildest-looking of the "ghillies" —with a long, tattered great-coat, *à-l'irlandaise*—

took courage, and starting into the open space beside the fires, began dancing. Louder singing and clapping of hands, mingled with shouts and screams, soon excited him to such vigorous activity as must have pleased even "Tam o' Shanter." Many of the steps were tolerable; but the chief feat was springing on the very points of the toes, and spinning round with great velocity. At the end of one of these pirouettes, the dancer fell flat on the grass, and, with a strange ventriloquial sound, vented moans of complaint, as if he had half killed himself. His very clever buffoonery which followed I need not attempt to describe, because I have no doubt that his impromptus, which I did not understand, but which raised shouts of laughter from all around, formed the best part of it. Yet his imitations of a cat, a cur, &c., were excellent in their way; and he enjoyed the usual privilege of buffoons, as he approached the booths and addressed the nobles in speeches that excited much mirth, which he further increased by giving Ali, whose serf he is, two or three sound whacks over the shoulders with a stick. My Herculean friend received them in the spirit of fun in which they were bestowed by the actor. I had amused myself during our sailing with making this lad grin, to excite "the laughing devil in his eye"—one of the most extraordinary I have ever seen.

When the performance was over, I gave the donor of the goat a small present (unlooked for by him). He and his troop of neighbours then set forth for their respective homes, bearing torches of pine-wood which glimmered with fine scenic effect among the

pathways of the forest, and formed a fit finale to our drama. Side by side we then stretched ourselves on lairs of fern, and, with our more vital parts scantily sheltered by our booth from the night-dew, and our feet projecting towards the replenished night-fires, enjoyed a short and sound repose.

Yesterday morning, while the stars still shone, Ali's shouts to his boatmen roused us all from our ferny couches. Shamuz, who had performed his ablutions at a little stream, and said his morning prayers on the beach, was among the first who were ready. The boat was launched and loaded and we well on our way before sunrise. With the sunrise came a fine breeze from the southward, and in an hour we reached a snug bay and lovely valley named Tû, where there is said to be good shelter and anchorage close in-shore for large vessels, and a rich and very populous neighbourhood. In another hour we were opposite the bay and valley of Neghipsikwa; and in half an hour more we passed a great cliff, on the north west of which is a remarkably beautiful bay called Klûf, where the shelter from the southward and eastward, near the shore at least, appeared excellent.

From this point the coast trends much more to the westward; consequently our southerly wind came to blow more directly on shore, and in such varying and hard squalls, that, although eager to get on, I was well pleased when Ali determined to land, as his boat-management throughout had given me a higher opinion of his courage than his skill. We landed about 8 A. M. on a rather open part of the coast, and the wind still continuing high, Ali set out in quest

of horses, as we were now only some ten miles from his home. Horses for him, the indisposed seniors, myself and servant, were soon procured; and after a breakfast of farm-fare brought (gratis, as all eating in this country is) by the nearest cottager, we set forth about mid-day.

For two or three miles we rode along the shingle of the beach, and then where it became impassable from large rocks at the base of a line of precipices, we turned off to the hills; and I was surprised to see that even in the wood of dwarf oaks through which we passed, and where the soil was evidently scanty and but little productive, there were fences, not only along the roadway, but elsewhere, showing the entire division of the property. Ali now rode forward to make preparation at his hamlet for our reception.

From the summit of the precipices just spoken of, I saw the strata extending, from the mountain I was on, a great way, beneath the clear water at this curve of the coast, toward the southern shore. The view in that direction, as well as over the wide expanse of the Euxine, was magnificent; and on that sea not a Russian sail was to be seen. I have been now seventeen days on this coast, and along a considerable portion of it; yet, during all that time, although I have been continually looking out for and inquiring about Russian vessels, I have only once either heard of or seen them; and then it was two sail presumed to be Russian, but at too great a distance from land to be recognised. There has been nothing in the weather or wind to prevent their going where they pleased. The blockade, in fact, seems to be the

merest farce, excepting when a vessel is occasionally fallen in with, or the Russians venture, by stealth and under cloud of night, to burn any they may find unguarded on the beach, as they attempted lately with a couple at Tû; and I have been told repeatedly that one hundred and fifty vessels find constant employment in the trade between this country and Turkey, in spite of the blockade.

On reaching the termination of those precipitous hills, we came in view of a spacious sandy bay and large valley and stream called Shapsikwa. In this bay Hassan Bey's vessel was riding at anchor, having removed from Toapse when the wind increased; and on the beach was a vessel I had been offered at Sinope, as a better sailer than the one I hired. It had fallen in with the Russian cruisers, and having been forced to run on shore when the sea was high, had got bilged; in consequence of which the salt on board had been lost.

Our onward route lay along the shore, which was sadly cumbered with rocks; yet my young and lively horse seemed used to picking his steps among them as well as on the narrow pathways along the edges of some of the precipices we had passed, which might have shaken my nerves but for the goat-like adroitness he displayed. Along the face of the low hills we were now passing, I recognised loose black soil, similar to that which contained the iron-stone at Mesgahu; and a little search soon produced me the same mineral, which appeared equally rich. This soil is here of considerable extent.

After riding two or three miles along the beach, we came to another spacious sandy bay; and this, I

was happy to learn, was Jûbghe, the one I had first attempted to make in the Vixen. On entering it, one of the younger brothers Zazi-okû met us and alighted to bid us welcome. On each side of the bay there are hills; and immediately behind the sweep of sand begins a noble grove of tall and stately oak, where we met Ali returning to escort us. Having passed through this grove, a spacious green valley appeared, with an ample stream flowing through it, in which two Turkish vessels lay secure, while their captains and crews sat smoking on the banks. Here was the chief scene of the late battle, of which the trees of the grove also afforded me mementos in passing.

About a mile up the valley we turned a little to the right, and there, at the foot of a low wooded hill, found the numerous dwellings of the Zazi-okû family, within a well-fenced and spacious park, on entering which we were saluted with two discharges of cannon. The guest-house here is superior to any I have yet seen, and in it the eldest brother, Mehmet, received me with the greatest cordiality and many well-framed sentences of civility, among which was this: "that henceforth we are to be considered as having had the same father and the same mother;" to which I assented, with some "mental reservation." At the same time, Mehmet begged that I would change coats with him, to become more like a Circassian: so he squeezed his brawny shoulders into my smart, tight-fit surtout, and I now luxuriate at ease in an ample tunic of brown cloth, trimmed with silver lace round the skirts, sleeves, and cartouch-pouches on the breast.

I have been to the wood to see vestiges (besides the balls brought me) of the battle lately fought there, of which it affords abundance, in shot-marks and splintered branches. The Russian general first tried to parley, vaunting the power of Russia, and the fearful consequences of resistance, to all which Mehmet only replied by a challenge to land and fight. The ships cannonaded for some time; and four battalions of about 3000 men and two pieces of cannon were landed at a corner of the bay under cover of their fire. The suddenness of the atack had not given time for the assemblage of any considerable Circassian force; but the immediate neighbourhood furnished about a thousand warriors, who remained in groups behind such cover as the sides of the valley afforded, until the Russian infantry began to advance through the grove. A very sanguinary struggle then ensued, terminating, as already mentioned, in the repulse of the Russians, who had not been able to advance more than half-way towards the hamlet, the destruction of which was, no doubt, the purpose of their debarcation. This family lost on the occasion about five-and-twenty relatives.

In this farm-stead there are no less than thirteen Poles and seven Russians, deserters and prisoners. Among the latter is the sub-officer captured by Ali, whose legs are at present hung with a somewhat ponderous pair of gyves, on account of his having twice shown a disposition to escape. Such Russians as are captured are exchanged, from time to time, for Circassians in the same predicament; but I am glad to learn that this is not done with either

Russians or Poles who have deserted. They are either retained as farm-servants, or sold, if they prefer it, to merchants from Turkey, where slavery is even less irksome than here, and speedy manumission (that is, in five or six years) more probable. One of the Poles, a young man who had deserted from Ghilenjik, after having hovered round the guest-house for some time, at length ventured in, when he found that only I and my man (who speaks Polish) were within, to see what intelligence or consolation I could give him in regard to his country. I gave him the best I could, and the tears rolled down his cheeks while it was communicated to him.

On the other side of the grove, as in similar localities at other parts of the coast, I have observed wooden crosses erected. They are of various forms; the transverse portion being in some cases on the top of the other, and in others rather lower. Both are more or less carved. According to the report of this family, the worship at these crosses was formerly very frequent and numerously attended; but of late it is rare and partial, as many disapprove of and ridicule the practice. Quære—how far has this Russian war contributed here to bring into contempt the religion of the cross?

Shamuz has expressed regret at having omitted to show me, on the coast to the southward, where coal has been found; but he promises to take me to other places in the north where it is coming into use for fuel.

Here, as in the south, I have had a constant succession of visitors, the most interesting of whom,

both on account of his appearance—his massive muscle and lion-look—and of the intrepid and enterprising character I hear of him, is old Hadji Guz Beg of Shapsuk, who has just bid me good-bye, and left deeply impressed on my imagination the dismay with which the roused spirit of his wrath might unnerve any ordinary antagonist. He left the neighbourhood of the Kûban yesterday, and crossed the intervening mountains almost without affording his steed a breathing-halt, on purpose to see the Englishman and hear his news. He and his single attendant reported that four battalions of Russians, with cannon, &c. had already crossed the Kûban; and that there had been some fighting, but without much result, as the Circassians were not then assembled in force. The numerous musters they met flocking northward gave promise, however, that a battle would soon take place.

All I have seen here express the same determination as those of the south—to resist to the last, and to contend for mountain by mountain; yet there is an evident wish that the European powers (especially England) should interfere in their behalf, or that, at least, the means of continuing the war should be furnished them—cannon and powder, or sulphur alone.

Their chief fear appears to be that the Russians, by means of their shipping, may possess themselves of the most accessible positions on the coast, particularly the bay of Semez, where stood the old fort of Sûjûk-kaleh. I find the same argument made use of here as in the south. They say that this country was always free; and that as Greece, after so short a struggle, was

freed by European intervention, they merit much more such aid who have fought for more than a century to maintain their independence.

The Russian warfare toward the north has been described to me as utterly barbarous. Parties enter the hamlets during the night, and not only carry off the women, children, and cattle, but mutilate the bodies of such men as are slain in resisting them. No less than thirty women and children were thus carried off in one night, from a village eastward on the Kûban; and as the people of that district were greatly distressed in consequence, a letter, announcing my arrival, was despatched from this place for their encouragement, immediately on the receipt of that intelligence. All, even the women and children, are said to participate in this feeling of encouragement; and my chief and most irksome task is, and must be, to prevent their placing too much hope in any immediate action of England—ignorant as I am of what policy may be there adopted—and to persuade them to rely chiefly upon themselves.

LETTER IV.

JOURNEY FROM PSHAT TO SEMEZ.

PSHAT, *Thursday 11th May*, 1837.

MY DEAR ———. Yesterday morning after a good breakfast I set out from my quarters at Jûbghe, under another salute from the two cannons; the four kind brothers, with their families and visitors, to the number of about forty, accompanying me to the beach, where a boat had been prepared to convey me to this place. In it the two youngest brothers Zazi-okû (both of whom have already been wounded in the war on the Kûban) and Hûssein embarked along with me, while Shamuz, who left his excellent servant with me, preferred riding. At ten we left the bay of Jûbghe. Vessels could not remain long at anchor in it with safety; but Ali says, that if the war were over, he would very soon cut a channel into the river for smaller vessels, perhaps, of eighty or one hundred tons. At half-past one, (going about four to five knots) we reached a small bay river and pleasant valley called Tshopsine. On the beach was a large boat loading provisions to take to some district in the south, where cultivation had been intermitted last year owing to the plague having been brought there; and on entering the river for the purpose of changing some of the rowers, we found a Turkish vessel just arrived from Trebi-

zond. This river seems deep for some distance from its mouth; and I thought a vessel of one hundred to one hundred and fifty tons might find water enough in it, if the bar were made passable, which it is not at present.

At two we started again, having acquired two fiery young men, who rowed and sung the whole of the remainder of the way with undiminished energy. One of them seemed also a professed wit, and the Mesgahu buffoon being again one of the rowers, I was much amused by seeing his continued efforts to get his own proper jokes introduced, and the stoical indifference with which the other regarded them. But all joined heartily in the singing. At times the responses were executed by three different parties alternately, and most of the voices being full-toned and manly, the effect, on the still summer sea, the weather being calm and beautiful, was most delightfully exciting. The scenery tended not a little to heighten this effect. On our right were precipices of fifty to one hundred feet high, from which beautiful meadows, corn-fields, and copses sloped gently upwards for some distance, with hamlets scattered here and there; while behind us, to the south-east, the whole coast, as far as Ghagra, with its mountains, promontories, creeks, and bays, lay expanded to view. Of course only the mountains towards Ghagra were visible at this distance. They seemed to stretch to the very sea, and glistened throughout with snow, which I am told they often retain the whole year. At four we reached a small valley called Beshi. Its western cape, of the same name, projects considerably,

and forms with Yildûk, on the north-west, (also a considerable cape,) the two headlands of the bay of Pshat, on whose ample gravelly beach I landed at five, thus finishing my coasting voyage. The most remarkable feature of this coast is that along the whole extent of it that I have seen there is a beach, which, with the exception of a few portions of small extent, where rocks have encumbered it, forms a tolerable highway for horses and foot passengers; and although in general too heavy for carriages, it must yet be very advantageous to the natives (especially in winter), on account of the mountainous and difficult nature of the whole of the adjoining country. The next feature in importance, is that the whole of the precipices (none of them very high) which border by far the greater portion of the beach, consist in general of rocks, with minute strata, no large masses of stone being anywhere visible except in the neighbourhood of Vardan. These strata generally present their edges towards the sea, and the cliff generally makes a very acute angle with the horizontal line. From Klûf, in the direction of south-east, the strata generally dip to the N.W.; while to the north-west of that bay, whence the coast has a more westerly trending, the strata generally dip to the E. But inclinations of all kinds are here and there to be seen, and on the end of the hill, next Pshat, the strata in one place surrounded a core. It is to be hoped that some experienced English geologist will soon traverse this coast, which I have no doubt will be found highly interesting. A third general feature of this portion of the coast may be noticed, as of more general

interest, viz.—that although abounding in bays, none of these are of such depth and form as to afford shelter against winds from the south and west. Pshat is one of the best, yet very open. The anchorage, however, along the coast is, in general, excellent; and the sea-winds are said rarely to "blow home" with violence.

On landing, one of the Zazi-okûs immediately went to procure me some conveyance, as the hamlet of Indar-okû, the chief here, is at a distance of four or five miles from the sea. On the verge of a small wood on the shore stands a wooden cross. The young chief was unable to procure me anything better than a great ox-cart, which served to carry my baggage, and to transport me across the rapid, shallow Pshat. He subsequently discovered two horses feeding, one of which he soon caught, accoutred, and brought me. Our road lay, as I have already said, for four or five miles up the valley of the Pshat, which, though now a small clear stream, seems to commit great havoc in winter, as it has washed away, or covered with stones, the soil of the greater portion of the valley; and in one place its bed of stones seemed to me about half a mile in breadth. The moon and stars had been shining for some time before we reached the hamlet in which I now write, where I found a very tidy new guest-house, with its paddock neatly railed in, and its divan furnished with beautiful matting, Turkey carpet, and silken pillows. A hot supper was soon served, at which a son of the chief attended, and I went to sleep early, to make up for the want of it (through writing) the night before.

Friday, 12*th*.—Yesterday morning, before my second breakfast, Shamuz entered, and bidding me good morning, said that he had arrived the night before, but finding the door shut and all still, he did not like to disturb me, as I needed sleep; and that he, therefore, sought quarters elsewhere. After breakfast, my host Indar-okû, whose beard *one hundred winters have bleached*, (by the bye he alone wears only moustaches*,) paid me a visit. I told him I was happy to make his acquaintance personally, as I had known him before, both by what I had read and heard of him. He replied, that he believed both good and ill had been spoken of him; but that, at least, he was always happy to see and entertain, to the best of his power (as he should me) those who came to his house; adding, that when I went to the south, it was too far for him to attempt to follow me, but that since I came here, he could not sleep all night for joy at the hope my arrival had given him, nor rest until he had come to see me. "We are too poor," continued the old chief, "to recompense the English properly for thinking of us in our distress; but God will reward them; and every day in my prayers, I pray God to do so. I am now old and very infirm, and my only wish before I die is, that I may see my country free and at peace." I said the best specifics for old age were repose and freedom from care; and that he should endeavour to believe that his country's cause was now about to prosper. "*How*

* Subsequent observation made me believe this to have been the ancient Circassian mode, especially of those who adhered to the worship of the Cross.

can I rest," replied he, "when my heart is a prey to anxiety about my country!" He then begged permission (as is always done) to retire. I give this conversation the more readily, because, somehow, an idea seems to exist that this chief is friendly to Russia, of which I see no proofs; and his countrymen, at whom I have inquired about him, all say that he was friendly at the time Russia made the experiment of trade, (he still expresses great esteem for Monsieur de Marigny) but is so no longer, and has taken his share in the war against her on the Kûban. Moreover, he has a Turkish vessel at this moment lying in his river in contravention of her laws; his échelle was lately attacked with a view to destroy one or two others, when some fighting took place; and he sent one of his sons for me to Jûbghe. His hamlet is seated, at all events, a good way beyond the reach of the guns of his "friends," and at the foot of some hills, which would afford good refuge in case of a hostile visit.

The country hereabouts is less rich than about Jûbghe, and much less rich than the neighbourhoods of Mamaï and Sûtsha; yet it is by no means poor, and the cultivation, both in the valley and up three-fourths of many of the hills, is very considerable, proving, as there is very little exportation, the populousness of the country. It appears there is some difficulty in getting horses even from this wealthy establishment; but the difficulty is merely incidental, owing to several having been sent with two of the chief's sons, who are gone into the interior for change of air for one of them who is ill; to others, having

accompanied the one who went to Jûbghe; and lastly, to a number having been presented along with many other valuable articles to the parents of a family who have just given a beautiful daughter in marriage to another of his sons.

Throughout all Circassia, I am told, there are fraternities and extensive associations of these smaller brotherhoods. Their chief peculiarities are, that the members are bound mutually to protect each other, and assist in paying the fine of individuals who may commit manslaughter, or other crimes: but this is only done on the first, or first and second occasions; if the offence is again repeated, the society takes the punishment of the individual upon itself, and sometimes inflicts death. All the brotherhood are also bound to aid any member who may fall into reduced circumstances. In travelling they enter the family houses of each other, as freely as if they were brothers in reality. No brother may marry the daughter of one of his brother associates, and the fraternity sees specially that no brother disgrace himself by a marriage beneath his grade in the country, whatever it may be; for there are fraternities of nobles of different grades, and of freemen, including *their serfs also*. Each fraternity has its appropriate name.

The family of Indar-okû worships at the cross, and the account of that worship which my servant has received from a Russian slave here is very different from the account I got formerly, and which was most probably tinged by the opinions of Mehmet, who gave it me. The Russian says the worship takes place on the *Sundays* of alternate months;

and that if we stay till next Sunday we may see old Indar-okû and his family, with many others, go down to the cross at the bay to worship. The formulæ, I am told, are these:—The congregation place themselves on their knees at some little distance in front of the cross, and say their prayers, after which two old men advance to the cross with bread or pasta, and a fermented liquor called shuat or bosé, in their hands. *They pray for a blessing upon these,* and then distribute them among the people. If I find a good opportunity, I shall endeavour to get more precise information hereafter.

Luca constantly exclaims in wonder at the numbers of Russians and Poles he meets with everywhere. In this establishment are three or four Russians.

My attention having just now been caught by a lively and beautiful light bay horse, tied to a tree, I went out to examine him and learn his value. He is six years old, and has been offered to me for 500 piastres (not quite £5); and if there be any analogy between the dealing in this article here and in England, of course the horse might be bought for much less than was asked of me.

Kwakwûz, May 13.—Yesterday I left Pshat, after a second visit from the chief, Indar-okû, who, old as he is, has not yet lost a tooth: one of his chief dependents, his grandson, and another accompanied me, all on foot; and we had not gone far when we were joined by a Pole, whom I was much gratified to see mounted and armed like the rest; and was still more gratified to learn that he was free, and that his horse and arms were his own. By his account it is very easy

for a Pole here to obtain freedom, and it is through ignorance that others do not obtain it. He says he has a house of his own, and is liberally remunerated for practising as a physician, having acquired some medical knowledge at Warsaw.

But his account of the way in which he effected his escape from Russian military servitude is most extraordinary. He says he was in perfect despair at the condition he found himself in as a Russian soldier, and, therefore, got an interview with the General at Anapa, and told him that, whatever the consequences might be, he would not remain in the army; but, that if the General would give him a pass to quit it, he would give him a sum of money he had.

The bargain was struck, and here he is, and has already been back to the neighbourhood of Anapa, and taken part in an engagement against the Russians.

Our route from Pshat lay for three hours up the wide channels of the stream of the same name: we afterwards turned up the glen of a smaller rivulet, which runs into it on the west; and quitting the latter, our pathway became very tortuous and difficult, amid the woods and hills of the ascent, and in some places the deep mire. The fertility of the soil seemed to increase as we advanced; but the trees, which are chiefly hard wood, were none of them of considerable size. Both along the vale of the Pshat, and at this point, the neighbouring mountains showed great portions of their sides cleared, or being cleared, for cultivation; and the patches of cultivation near

enough to be better seen, were all inclosed with secure wattled fences. About the cottages are plenty of poultry; wild-ducks are also to be seen about the more secluded portions of the rivers. In about three and a half hours we had reached the summit of the defile (not lofty, but rugged,) which separates the vale of the Pshat from that of the Sûtshûk, which runs to Ghelenjik; and on reaching this latter vale, I found it level and moderately broad, producing abundance of rich herbage, and inclosed by mountains richly clothed with oaks and their usual associates.

Here we rested, and turned our horses loose to feed, luncheoning ourselves; during which time we were joined by a chief whose family is said to be of great antiquity, and to have first settled the district of Semez (or Sûjûk.) Another person, who speaks Turkish well, came with him; the purpose of both being to join and return with us. The number of persons I have met who can speak Turkish has as yet been considerable; many also can read and write it.

All the way along I have seen abundance of wild pear and apple trees, whose fruit is said to be excellent; and every breeze is now scented with hawthorn and honeysuckle. We crossed the Sûtshûk, which runs from S.E. to N.W. for about an hour and a half; but were then obliged to leave it, as it falls into the bay of Ghelenjik, which, for the present, is in the hands of the Russians. The route by this bay must have been the usual one before they got possession there; for the remainder of our way, thus far, was very difficult. For a short distance we

turned up the course of a small stream which falls from the north into the Sûtshûk, and on its banks I found such a pleasant hamlet, amid rich parks, abundance of cattle and poultry, as might have stopped Campbell's mendicant to lean on its substantial fences, and think—" Oh, that for me some home like this would smile,"—and yet this home which looked so snug and peaceful, is but about an hour's ride from the enemy's fortress !

Immediately beyond this point our path turned abruptly to the left, and a repartition of our luggage among the cattle, showed that it was about to become more difficult, as in fact it did ; for what with sloughs, entanglements of woods and underwoods, and steeps ascended by regular flights of horse-steps, I have seldom seen such another. Its summit afforded a magnificent and beautiful view of mountain, wood, meadow and water. In many parts I observed, on the edges of the woods, small grassy openings with little congregations of tombs, which are covered with stones, and have pieces of carved wood placed at the head and feet, amid which almost invariably was a cross, and a small wooden post with knobs for attaching the bridles of the horses of visitors : at these places, I was told, prayers were usually said. After descending from the eminence last mentioned, we, of the advanced party, fed our horses in a wide meadow, till some of the baggage came up, when a ride of a mile or so brought us among some more woods of much loftier trees, amid which appeared numerous hamlets. At the first of these, we learned, on applying, that accommodation for our party could not be had, (there

appears to be much travelling at present,) but our second application was more successful, and here we were at once received, all but the two who had joined us on the Sûtshûk, who have got quarters in the neighbourhood. The dwellers in this hamlet are but small proprietors (not noble), and yet although apparently poor in furniture, and still poorer in clothing, (some of the children are half, and others entirely naked,) their guest-house is better finished than those of the south, and their dishes, though not so *recherchés* as some of those set before me by the chiefs, are in abundance and substantially the same, and served with the same cleanliness and etiquette.

There is much wood of splendid growth in this valley, and its soil seems all of surpassing richness; the hamlets, too, are numerous, although a high hill to the westward is all that intervenes between them and the Russian garrison at Ghelenjik. But the peace of this valley has lately been a little broken in upon, as the Russian neighbours have, whether forced thereto by the neglect of their commissariat, or merely for mischief's sake, attempted by stealth this season, for the first time, four forays among the cattle in this district. The last of these occurred but a fortnight ago, when the Russians were severely repulsed, although four times as numerous as the Circassians, who were only the warriors (that s, every male fit to bear arms) of this and the adjoining hamlets, amounting in all to about fifty persons. Cannon had to be sent from Ghelenjik to enable the soldiers to effect their retreat. The Circassians are

not likely to be taken unawares again, as they have now sentinels constantly on the neighbouring hills to watch the motions of the garrison. Shamuz told me, last night, that within this year he has lost two brothers, fighting against the Russians; but he does not grieve at their loss, he says, as they died gloriously, and as he hopes yet to do. In all, he says, he has lost thirty-two relations in this war. He is an old and experienced warrior, having fought, and been severely wounded, at the siege of Imail, in Egypt, against the French, and been present on board a Turkish man-of-war, when Admiral Duckworth forced the passage of the Dardanelles. He says his relative, Indar-okû, was a very brave and hardy warrior in his day.—But the horses are ready, and I must rise.

Aduwhaû, Sunday, 14th.—We did not start yesterday till about mid-day, for the purpose, I presume, of resting the horses that belong to the attending chiefs, and which are not changed in travelling. Our route for about three hours lay through forests of stately oaks and beeches, with occasional openings and enclosures for cultivation, and over considerable undulations; and in one place a hill so steep, that it is ascended, as those of yesterday, by a complete flight of horse-steps. On our left were the lofty mountains immediately to the east of Ghelenjik, cultivated partially more than half way up, and on our right, others of less elevation. In this part of our course we passed two small streams—first, the Mazep, and then the Chabzi, which both fall into the Kûban. In an opening of the forest, beside the latter stream, we rested for prayers and luncheon, which, as yesterday,

consisted merely of the usual war-provision of the Circassians, which they carry before them in a skin hung on the saddle-bow; it is called gomîl, and is a mixture of flour (millet, I believe) and honey. It becomes slightly fermented, can be kept long, and, they say, gives them strength and courage. Our drink was water, served in the leaf of a burdock; and of the same leaf Shamuz made a carpet for his prayers, and the horses a hearty repast.

We next came to a rather difficult pass from which the fort of Nicolaevski on the Abûn was said to be at a distance of only about four miles to the right, and that of Doba at a similar distance to the left. On a narrow level I was shown the traces of the cannon of the army Williamineff had passed with from the Kûban to Ghilẹnjik; and the brow of a woody hill on our left was pointed out to me as the position the Circassians had chosen and assembled on for the purpose of attacking them, which, I was told, had been done very effectually. A little active old man, who accompanied us on foot to take back his horses, and who was described to me as a brave and indefatigable warrior, was wounded here, and another of our company lost a brother. We met near this place two men returning from the north. They reported that some fighting had just taken place near Anapa, in which one of them, with his head bound up, and of remarkably handsome and pleasing features, had been wounded. A general action, they said, was expected that day. They reported also the death of another of Shamuz' relatives, in consequence of wounds received in a late action;

thus adding another victim towards the hecatomb the Russians seem likely to make of all the male kindred of this old warrior.

We now entered the most beautiful, rich, and extensive valley I have yet seen, along which we rode for about two hours, without seeing any cattle or inhabitants, who have all retired to the neighbouring hills; for here the Russian army had committed more devastation than at any other place in its line of march; and it is said, that another course of fire and sword is almost daily expected to be attempted. But the valley had been exceedingly populous, and proofs of this were everywhere to be seen in torn fences, and the ashes and ruins of houses, caused by the *soi-disant* protectors of this country. By this route Williamineff and his army, after their attempt last summer to take and hold Sûjûk Kaleh, had made their way from Doba back to the Kûban; and as their artillery (without which they are almost powerless in this country) could here be best brought into play, on this lovely spot they had wrought most ruin. While I surveyed its enchanting beauties, I could scarcely bring myself to imagine their being violated by war. The Russians remained here twenty-four days, and during that time the fighting was almost incessant. The Circassians still estimate the number of Williamineff's army at 20,000 men; but a sage old Turk, whose house I here occupy, says there were 10,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry.

Some days before the arrival of the Vixen, Williamineff, finding his army almost broken up by

repeated battles, and his soldiers so dispirited that numbers had thrown away their arms, had determined on re-crossing the Kûban, and his artillery had already done so (probably to save them, whatever might become of the men); and the remainder of the army would inevitably have been destroyed before it could have crossed, as the Circassians were in considerable force, had he not saved himself by this *ruse*. He said the war was at an end, as his government was convinced that the English were determined to interfere, and the Emperor had sent a letter desiring him to cease hostilities. The Circassians still doubting him, he tendered his solemn oath as to the truth of what he said, and offered to show the letter he had received. The oath was taken in presence of the chief judge and the other seniors, and the army was permitted to repass the Kûban; and in the renewed hostilities of this year, the Circassians have acquired experience as to Russian honour, which I trust will not be lost upon them.

Quitting the cannon track which leads to Doba, we turned towards the right, and got again among some higher ground and wood; and here I at once found buildings and fences entire, and agriculture going on here as on other spots just on the verge of the valley, proving that beyond the level ground the Russians neither dared venture nor are feared. My Turkish authority, who was present at the engagements, says that when the Russians advanced, 4000 Circassians assembled and attacked them; that these Circassians, who are in some degree all volunteers, bringing their own provisions with them, supposing

the object the Russians had in view to have been accomplished by their having reached and remained so long in Ghelenjik and Doba, dispersed to their homes; that when the Russians set out from Doba for the Kûban only about 1000 Circassians mustered to oppose them; but that if the remainder of the original number had been there, not a man of the Russians would have reached the Kûban, as their force had been so broken, and so many of their arms destroyed and thrown away during their march.

This hamlet is little more than half an hour's ride from the portion of the valley through which the Russians passed; it is composed of about a dozen houses, seated at the base of the eastern hills, and several trading Turks reside here; one of whom affords accommodation for myself, servant, and the servant of Shamuz, of whose attendance I have much more than his master. The rest of our party sleep elsewhere. Our eating is excellent and profuse, for three households contribute to it; and each meal is a sort of picnic, at which some of the dishes are accidentally doubled, yet I must partake of both, not to offend the furnishers. The pasta is here far better, both in quality and cooking, than in the south; but to me the most remarkable dish was one of butter and honey mixed, and eaten with pastry enclosing pressed curds, the butter being better in every respect than any I have seen since leaving England, and quite as good as what is generally produced there. When the trade is opened, this must become a large article of export to Constantinople, where immense quantities of bad Russian butter are

at present imported. Pasture is excellent here, throughout the greater part of the year. Shamuz' spirits rise as he gets towards the north; he says he is now quite well, and the weather being stormy with torrents of rain, he tells me that I am now out from among the "barbarians of the south*," and may rest quietly, and consider myself at home—that is, near his house and native neighbourhood.

Luca has just concluded to my satisfaction an exchange for me of his watch for that of General Williamineff, which thus fell into the hands of the Circassians:—His baggage-waggon got upset and many of the contents destroyed, when the person in charge, fearful of his master's vengeance, absconded with this watch and some money which he had in charge. You will make two obvious reflections hereupon — that the Russian soldiers think their enemies more merciful than their officers, and that Williamineff's progress could not have been very orderly.

The sun set inauspiciously yesterday evening, and it rained and blew furiously during the night. This house is the worst roofed of any I have yet been in, (a Turk is the owner,) and I woke in the night with rain and clay falling on my head. Soon afterwards, I found a Circassian, who had got into the room I know not how, covering me with a felt cloak. Such is the unremitting attention I experience from these people.

* This unjust expression and some previous incidents were the first indications I observed of jealousy between the people of the north and the south—a feeling which afterwards became more apparent.

Semez, near Sûjûk Kaleh, Sunday evening.—At noon to-day, we left Aduwhaû for this place. On reaching the summit of the hill, we encountered the unbroken force of the gale from the south-east; but for myself, I felt well incited to make my way against it by the splendid view that had opened beneath us, of a wide expanse of the Black Sea, the beautiful bay of Sûjûk, its vale and surrounding hills. But the object that fixed the attention of the Circassians was a vessel riding at anchor within the eastern reef of the bay, and a debate arose among them whether it was a Russian war or merchant vessel. Its rigging made me decide upon the latter; when one of them said they would attempt to take her. The descent to the bay is exceedingly steep; we made our way through a wood in the centre of this valley; around it were large fences going to ruin, and tracts of ground which had been cultivated, but are now left waste, the invasion of last year having induced most of the inhabitants to seek safer quarters on the sides of the neighbouring hills. Amid the depths of the wood, however, a rich meadow or two are here and there to be seen, with a homestead and some cattle. All the more exposed houses were burnt last year by the Russians, who then destroyed one Shamuz had built in the fashion of those of Constantinople, thereby compelling him, like the rest, to betake himself to higher ground and humbler quarters. On passing the head of the bay, he was missing, and I found he had gone to order preparations for attacking the vessel; but I have since learned that she turns out to be a man-of-war.

The only fighting as yet, near Anapa, turns out to have been an attack upon the cattle of the military colonists, by a small party of Circassians from whom the colonists fled; a body of cavalry attempted to retaliate by a sortie, which the Circassians repulsed; but were in their turn repulsed by a body of infantry with cannon. When I was here with the Vixen, a chief told me he wished to go to Anapa to see a Turk, a particular friend of his who was detained there by the Russians; but he thought it necessary to apprise me of his intention for the information of Daûd Bey, lest he might think him a traitor. In consequence of his visit it appears, this Turk (who turns out to be an Armenian, although a Turkish subject) and a Greek came out of the fortress (I do not know how) with some goods; but the other Circassians refused to buy the goods (though salt constituted a part of them) as being Russian, and have since detained them and their owners; and application has just been made to me to know if I would advise their release. I refused to interfere, but gave it as my opinion that they were quite right in being suspicious of every person and thing that came from the Russian quarters, and should detain these persons in the mean time, and see that they have no correspondence.

Tuesday, 16*th*.—This hamlet is seated in a rather open glen, at a little distance from the valley; but backed by wooded hills, which, as I have seen in a walk I took among them (alone and armed only with a whip), afford defiles sufficiently intricate for refuge. The guest-house is the best finished and roofed I

have been in, and is half embosomed in trees and shrubs, among which are many wild roses. Its divan has a handsome silk mattress and bolster sprigged with gold thread, and at night I lay my head on a crimson silk pillow, and am covered with a striped silk coverlet; our tables are numerous and dishes excellent. The only thing that annoys me is being kept so much in the house (sitting with crossed legs on the divan to receive visiters) beside enormous fires, which are lighted up morning and evening, although the temperature at 5 A.M. ranges from 55 to 60. Here we have home-made and very good soap, the alkali for which is obtained from the ashes of the fires. As Mrs. Kehri-kû is busy washing my things to-day, she begs me to allow her to defer the alteration of my tunic till the washing be over. The ladies here have not yet, it would appear, learned the valuable arts of making card-racks and Chinese boxes.

The chiefs and retainers here generally spend a portion of each day in firing at a target placed on the other side of the glen. I gave a small prize to be fired for, and one of the former gained it. Boys and men are all "dead shots." To-day I have seen some of the friends I formerly made; and the pleasure of seeing a face even slightly known is, I assure you, among so many strange countenances, not a little gratifying. Among others came Mehmet Effendi, who embraced me twice, and really seemed to feel what he said, that he had not words to express his joy at my return and escape from the hands of the Russians. In joke he says, as did several others in

the south, that the best thing they could do would be to keep me here as a guarantee for assistance from England. The four battalions of Russians with cannon, I have mentioned, crossed the Kûban for the purpose of provisioning the garrison of one of their lately erected forts on the Abûn. Among my visiters is a person who received a ball through the left foot in an engagement with them.

Wednesday, 17th.—Thermometer, 5 A.M. 55°. Another former friend, a very noble-looking person, who is atalik, or tutor of Shamuz' eldest son, has just shown me some ancient copper coins found at Tshopsin, where are found many others of silver also, as well as swords, bows, arrows, &c. in the ancient cemeteries. He promises me a sight of his collection, and I shall endeavour to get some coins; but the silver coins have mostly been melted!

Part of Shamuz' salutation this morning was, "You English have invented steam-engines, steam-boats, infernal machines for blowing up ships, and many other wonderful things; but I cannot compliment you on your pantaloons, which are much too tight." This I find to my cost in sitting on his divan. I had heard before, yet had some difficulty in believing it to the full extent of what was told me, that the Circassians had installed their national flag as a Sanjak-sherîf (the sacred standard of the Turks), and have now assurance of the fact past doubt. The flag has hitherto been kept for greater security in the hamlet of Mehmet Effendi (chief judge here), and he tells me that his custody of it has caused no

little jealousy, as several of the chiefs say that they should have the keeping of it by turns for a blessing on their dwellings!

A letter from Constantinople has just arrived, and the judge having been cited, all my room-full of visiters are gone out upon the green to hear it read. It is from one of their countrymen, who was to have come with me, and who bade them take courage and not yield an inch to the Russians, as assistance from England may soon be expected, and then the affair must end favourably for them. A person also has just arrived from the interior, who says that the district whence the Russians carried off the thirty women and children had been greatly dispirited thereby, as their situation is very exposed; but that the news of my arrival had so encouraged them, that they undertook a foray of reprisal, and had just returned with twenty-five women and children and one man from the north side of the Kûban, without having had any of their party even wounded. Such is the civilization Russia is propagating in this part of the world! In my next I hope to give you a specimen of her military literature in the copy of a letter Williamineff wrote to the Circassians last winter. It is really a wonderful document, telling us how Russia never went to war but she was the victor; that she had conquered France, and after slaying her sons had carried off her daughters into captivity; that Turkey and Persia now lie powerless at her feet; that England dare not interfere here, as her citizens depend on Russia for their daily bread; that, in short, there are only two powers—God in heaven,

and the Emperor on earth ; and if the heavens should fall, they might be supported by the millions of the bayonets of Russia. I hope I have not spoiled the effect of the original. I wish to set out for the Kûban and the interior, to pursue my inquiries as to the commerce and state of the country, but I am requested to delay my departure for a day or two more, as a great body of chiefs is expected here, in consequence of four or five messengers having been sent them with word of my arrival. When they come, I am told a suitable escort will be provided for me. The devotion of the people I have seen to Mr. Urquhart (Daûd Bey), and the English, exceeds anything I could have imagined. They all wish not merely the friendship and aid of England, but that she should adopt the country as one of her dependencies.

A Circassian and two Armenians have been to beg my intercession for the Anapa merchants. I have refused to interfere further than by recommending that their goods be placed in safety in the mean time : which is to be done accordingly.

84798

LETTER V.

A CIRCASSIAN CONGRESS.

SEMEZ, *near* SÛJÛK-KALEH, *May* 18*th*, 1837.

MY DEAR ——. The person who was wounded at Abûn, and who is of an ancient Greek descent, is it seems cunning in saddlery, in which craft he has been aiding my host; but it interested me more to discover that he is one of the best musicians in the neighbourhood. This I found out by a most unpromising instrument of the violin genus: it is almost the size of a dancing-master's kit, the sounding-board is flat, and the back semicircular, which is resined for the bow to be primed on. It has but two horse-hair strings, pegged and bridged as ours; the bow is almost an arc, and the horse-hair string is loose, being tightened when necessary by the hand of the performer. The head of the instrument is placed, like a violoncello, on the ground where the performer sits, (for there are no chairs here,) and while playing he turns the instrument (which has no waist) from side to side, to aid his variation of the notes. He fingered and shook as we do, and yet with this slender means he roused me into lively interest, especially by one clamorous yet melodious air which seemed to me most like a "gathering;" but no pibroch I ever heard equalled it. A somewhat monotonous and plaintive air followed, accompanied by the voice. It was the eulogy of *Ali-bí*, (lately

killed in battle.) Old Shamuz, who sat by with his back to the wall, joined in the song, and presently the tears trickled down his dusk cheeks. It is a dogma among them not to lament those who fall fighting for their country, yet in some cases "nature will out."

Last night my host's youngest son, ten years of age, spent on the hill watching the horses: this must be as discipline, for there appear to be plenty of servants. He has already been to the wars as well as his brother who is fourteen, and whose atalik says, that whenever the Russians have taken the field, this lad can neither eat nor sleep till he is allowed to go and join his countrymen in fighting them. Both sons are here with their ataliks, (or guardians,) and there appears not to be any restraint (as some have said there is) upon their entering their father's house; but they never sit in his presence or eat unless with their backs turned, and heads in a corner of the room. Occasionally one of the guests at table hands to one of them (or the other attendants indiscriminately) some cake or pastry, which they eat always in the way I have described; and if the party receiving the pastry be holding the pitch-pine splinter-torch at the time, another relieves him of it that he may go to the corner and eat: This seems to originate in the maxim that neither the host nor any of his household should eat in the presence of strangers; and in general, in their presence, the former remain standing.

In this immediate neighbourhood the religion appears to be pure Mohammedanism, yet comparatively

few are regular in their prayers, and these generally fathers of families and elderly men. It is only, however, for the religion of the Turks that this active, practical people have any respect, themselves they seem to despise, and the treatment Circassia has received from the Turkish government makes one not wonder at the existence of this feeling. Old Shamuz, who should know the Turks, makes them a standing jest: for example, he said the other morning, "The Turk stretches out his long pipe," (the Circassian pipe is exceedingly small and portable,) "and gazing upon the sea and the sky hopes Heaven may help him, instead of helping himself." Concubinage is not permitted here, but a man may have more wives than one, (if he can pay for them). Prostitution and unnatural crimes are unknown. I am glad to receive here further testimony in favour of the patriotism of the Pshat family; the eldest son, especially, has taken an active part in the war, and is here looked upon as one of the bravest and most skilful warriors they have. The lady this family acquired at such cost for Kaspolet, the third son, is described to me as of surpassing beauty, and to have been competed for eagerly by many.

Semez, 20th, 4½ A.M.—This I find to be the best time for writing, as throughout the rest of the day I am constantly liable to interruption; and even at this time it is but a short leisure I have; for almost every night there are other visiters who sleep here, (sometimes five or six—covering with their mats the greater part of the floor,) and they generally rise very soon after day-light. Mehmet Effendi is

my only fellow occupant at present, and luckily his priestship loves a morning nap.

I had another old acquaintance here till yesterday morning; viz. the very handsome old gentleman who embraced me last year on landing from the Vixen. He brought me now a large loaf and some cakes, (I presume as a compliment to me, though it would seem but a lame one to my host,) and has invited us to pay him a visit to-morrow. I will warrant his table a good one; for he has no pretence to the national slenderness of waist. I have had a visit also of three deputies and their attendants from Sûp, (the district whence the women and children were carried off,) who came to take my advice as to what is to be done under their painful circumstances. It has been decided that they should wait till Monday, and meet me at Adughûm, where there is to be a general assemblage of chiefs for the purpose of receiving me, hearing my news, and concerting future operations.

Yesterday the Circassians had a false alarm, and I a bitter disappointment. After an early dinner I rode down to the bay attended by a lively lad; and as we paced slowly along the margin of the sea, (of which by the way the horses drank as heartily as ever I saw any drink water quite fresh,) I perceived, to my astonishment, the well-known sign of a steamer at sea. I pointed out the dim trail of smoke to the lad, but he insisted it was a cloud, till coming on higher ground he was convinced of his mistake by discovering the hull of the vessel, which rapidly became more distinct. Excepting on the occasion of

Count Worenzov's expedition, a steamer had never been seen on this coast. I felt, therefore, a strong conviction of the probability of this one being from Constantinople, carrying my promised associates and their news, or possibly from England with letters; but I said nothing, for fear of creating false hopes.

The lad and I immediately set off (to communicate the intelligence to Shamuz) at full gallop, the excitement of which made him draw his sabre and pistol, and show me how he used them in battle; for, though beardless, he has already bagged his five Russians. Half-way back, I urged him on, and then returned to the beach, where to my mortification I no longer saw the steamer, and learned from a man I met that she had put into Ghelenjík—thus affording me a double vexation, by disappointing me in regard to my friends, and by giving reason to fear that the Emperor has added a steamer to the blockading squadron. This narrative may seem trifling, yet a single mariner rescued from a desert island would be listened to as he told of the hopes and fears that had agitated him; and mine are the hopes and fears of a deserted nation! As I returned I found on a height a body of Circassians with Shamuz in the midst, ready to watch the motions of the enemy. To turn my time to some account, I went down the west side of the bay to see the old Turkish fort (called Sûjûk-kaleh). It is a walled and fossed square of about 200 yards, with bastions at the corners, and some rows of buildings in the area, all apparently long since ruined. Near it is the best anchorage in a westerly wind.

The Russians, I am told, have of late been making strong efforts for peace. There is a tree between the hostile lines, where they are in the habit of placing, over night, any communications they wish to make to the Circassians. The latter found there very lately a letter, saying, "Why did they hope for aid from England, which is too weak to afford them any? If they wished for peace, let them apply to the Russians, and not trust to the lying English at Constantinople, who sent them a flag to make fools of them." The Circassians sent them a contemptuous answer and burnt their letter, to my great mortification, as it would have made a *bon morceau* for publication. I am promised all the letters that arrive in future, but probably this expedient is exhausted, and war will be the next. To prepare for it, there is a circular drawn up, to be read for approval on Monday at the meeting of the chiefs, and to be sent to all those who may not be there, calling upon them to aid in making a grand effort to repel the impending invasion, and to see above all things, that no merchant or other person from the Russian territory enter their districts, as they are doubtless all spies, and should be treated as such. Yesterday I was told that a person was come from the north to apply privately to Mehmet Effendi, to get him to see if I would recommend to his countrymen to permit the recal of a Circassian who has been expatriated for some years, and his effects sold, for having received into his house a Russian engineer officer from Anapa. He is contrite, and says he would remain here even a prisoner, if his life were secured, which he says might

be done now that an Englishman is here. He promised to communicate important intelligence, as it is known where he is, that a messenger has arrived from England at Constantinople to treat for the Circassians. I have refused to interfere, and have advised the rejection of him and his news, as spies are now above all to be guarded against, and he might probably turn out to be one.

The Russians destroyed last year about 40,000 kilos of grain in this neighbourhood. I have therefore advised the Circassians who live near each other to combine, and have places prepared amid the hills, where they can have their grain securely stored and watched.

Mehmet Effendi in translating the address I wrote for the chiefs, who may not be present on Monday, found my expressions—as to the necessity for those at a distance aiding strenuously, for their own ultimate safety in the defence of the frontier provinces—too plain; and therefore he cooked them up thus; that if the roast be about to be burnt, the spit (of course it is made of wood here) must be in some danger. Here is a splendid figure! The central ridge of mountain is our spit; Shapsûk and Notwhatsh (the warring provinces) our roast, and the Russian lines on the Kûban the fire. And it is this fire that must be removed, for our roast and spit are as immoveable as Newton himself.

Near Abûn there is a mine, I am told, where precious stones of a golden colour have been found. It cannot at present be approached for the guns of the fort.

The story of Hassan Bey's captivity is somewhat curious. One of his brothers, a colonel in the Turkish service, obtained a Russian passport to come to Circassia, by way of Anapa, to see Hassan; but finding at Sinope a vessel going direct to the eastern coast, he took passage by her. While at his brother's, some Russian men-of-war appeared on the coast, and the colonel determined on going on board one of them, as a good opportunity of part conveyance back to Constantinople. Hassan remonstrated, the colonel remained firm, and the former then said he would accompany him on board. The Russian carried both to Anapa, where the colonel was detained six months, and, after much remonstrance, permitted to proceed to Constantinople; while poor Hassan, looked upon no doubt as lawful prize, was placed in the ranks as a common soldier, and sent to Viborg to deplore his silly confidence.

Semez, Sunday 21*st.*—This morning, while busy with preparations to set out for the congress, I received the joyful news that an Englishman and his dragoman have arrived at Pshat, and were to proceed northward immediately to join me. This has put us all in high spirits. Soon after the two merchants from Anapa came; and having kissed my hand, and placed it on their foreheads (the most respectful mode of salutation here), they proceeded to state the hardships of their case, and to beg my aid, declaring at the same time that they can produce here many respectable sureties for their honour and respectability. I replied, that they had been hardly treated (for permission had been obtained for their coming out of the

fortress); but that they must have patience in the mean time, till the affair could be judicially arranged, as the trade they had been engaged in was against the interest of this country. We were taking an early dinner at the time, and these two (an Armenian and a Greek) were placed at the second table (there were a third and fourth), with a Mussulman Circassian.

I have had a visit from a judge eighty years of age, yet armed for action like the rest. Before leaving this valley, I may attempt to give some account of it. The surrounding hills have not that exuberant luxuriance I have seen on others in this country, yet parts of them are clothed with wood of tolerable growth, and excellent pasture and crops of grain; but the centre of the great valley especially, and of most of the others branching off, is exceedingly fertile. The whole length of the former (from N. to S.) is about nine miles, and its extreme breadth about three. But of all this large and valuable tract, I should think not above a fifth is at present occupied and cultivated; the last inroad of the Russians, and the expectation of another one, having induced the inhabitants to betake themselves to the hills. In a shrubby part of the valley, I was shown where a Russian general had fallen last year, by the hand of Indar-okû Noghaï.

Aghsmûg, Monday, 22d.—Our ride yesterday, though of only between four and five hours, was of exceeding interest and beauty. We crossed the valley diagonally to the north, and then ascended one of its bounding hills, from which the view of the

vale, its hills, the bay, and the bluff head-land of Atshimsha, was exceedingly beautiful. As we got near the grassy summit of this hill, we passed a large herd of oxen feeding there; and here our Greco-Tcherkess with the wounded foot (which he will not be persuaded to take care of by remaining at home), and the son of my old host, struck up, to beguile the way, one of their riding-songs, which, like those of the rowers, was sung in alternate parts, one being a sort of clamorous recitative, and the other a choral fugue. I fear my ignorance of terms gives but a faint idea of a species of music which I have found novel, romantic, and highly pleasing. Having surmounted the hill, we came in view of a small valley, embosomed in forest-clad hills, along the side of one of which we descended, by a very narrow footway, completely overshaded by large trees. This valley seemed well cultivated, and the wattled fences (here out of reach of Russian ravage) were ornamentally and securely worked. We rested on a bank of excellent pasture amid great flocks of goats and sheep (very many of the latter are black), till the remainder of our party arrived; for I forgot to say, that it had swelled to a pretty large one, by the junction of sundry chiefs and their attendants.

We ascended from the valley through an open wood with hamlets interspersed, and fields of grain exceedingly luxuriant; some of it here, as well as at Sûjûk, was, I am sure, six feet high: it is now in full flower. Next came a succession of ascents and descents not remarkable, except indeed in regard to cultivation, which was so general, and the sides of

the fields were so clean and well fenced, that I could have believed (had other things permitted) that I was in one of the best cultivated parts of Yorkshire. One patch of linseed was being carefully weeded by five veiled females. We passed out amidst this rich and beautiful scenery (the black and sparkling eyes of the young females who peeped round the corners of the cottages, and shrunk back whenever I turned towards them, constituting by no means one of its least attractions), and ascending through a fine wood of oaks, beeches, &c., came to the open brow of the hill, from whose summit a magnificent view to the north lay expanded. Immediately beneath us were hills all much cultivated, and decreasing in elevation till lost in a vast extent of comparatively dead level, which was bounded only by the horizon. There I was told was the Kûban; but while endeavouring to find it out, and to put into some train of thought the feelings that were tumultuously congregating within me in thus coming in sight of the country of the enemy of these kind, and, to all appearance, happy people; of the plains, which the cannon of Russia had overrun, and the hills which had at length arrested her progress; my attention was diverted by the advance from the left of a party whom I had seen from a distance gamboling with their horses around a neighbouring summit. So soon as they were within a few paces, they all dismounted and advanced on foot to salute me by kissing my hand and placing it on their foreheads. The most remarkable among them, to my eye, was a middle-aged man (of very pleasing features and expression), the first I had seen dressed in a coat of

ring-mail, with plates of polished steel behind the arms. Mehmet Effendi took care to inform me immediately, that this person is a priest, for he had before bade me remark, that the mollahs of Circassia not only exhort the people to go forth to battle, but set an example by doing so themselves, referring me at the same time to all the inhabitants of his district, who would testify that he was never found wanting in the field, unlike, as he said, the mollahs of Turkey, who preach to others the blessing of martyrdom, but avoid it themselves. The usual salutations having been exchanged, we all rode forward together, amounting now to between forty and fifty persons. After a short descent we came again among trees and fields, and soon after in sight of a hamlet and its cornfields, very snugly placed at the foot of two hills. So soon as our advanced guard came to its fence, a pistol or two were discharged; these were returned by the inmates, and other firing rapidly succeeded, amid shouts of men and careering of horses, so that if I had been more ignorant of the usages of the country I might have supposed a skirmish had occurred; but luckily for my nerves (those of the ladies must here be good), I knew the firing to be proofs of our having arrived at our night's quarters, viz. the residence of my handsome elderly friend Tshûrûgh, who is a great merchant, and moreover a brave warrior. The chiefs and others alighted just within the court-yard, but I was desired to advance to the door of the guest-house, where my robust and smiling host received me with great cordiality, and led me into a small but beautifully furnished apartment; as

besides the rich stuff of its chief divan, it has a hanging of showy Turkish carpeting along all that side of the wall.

I have mentioned before the abundance of good oak in this country. The other chief articles for England are wax, tallow, honey, hides (ox, horse, goat, and deer), hare-skins, &c. The only furs I have yet seen are fox and, I believe, fitch (a very beautiful fur), in great esteem at Constantinople for pelisses. The largest traders to the eastward are Armenians. They also draw away some articles even from these provinces, but are generally looked upon with suspicion; and it will be no very difficult matter, with proper arrangements, to cope with them. Wool is not plentiful hereabouts; I believe it is more abundant inland. I have found ironstone abundant, and am promised, whenever the war is over, to be shown more, as well as where lead, silver, and precious stones, may be found. All articles of export I expect to find much more abundant and cheaper in the eastern provinces, where they have less commercial connexion with Turkey. Articles of prime necessity to send here are bar and rod iron, and various British manufactures of cotton.

Tuesday, 23d May 1837.—I intended to place our ample and varied supper of last night before you, but I have since seen greater wonders of that sort, and shall therefore rather tell you of our phrenological entertainment.

My servant has a great hankering after the science, and having persuaded me in the south to try my skill on one or two, the fame of the science has travelled

in our company ever since, and I am obliged every now and then to gratify some one curious to know his native qualities. But last night my slender knowledge was not left to grope in the dark, as his reverence, Mehmet Effendi, who is something of a wag, and wished for a jest at the expense of our host, and of another elderly gentleman, who lives in this hamlet, gave me a secret hint beforehand of both their characters, viz., that the former was devoted to the fair sex, and the other spent much of his time in working very beautifully in silver. He then called upon me aloud to try my skill on these two subjects; and our jolly host, after a little coyness, came forward, his handsome features kindled into so radiant a smile as seemed to me still sufficient to melt the hearts of ladies much younger, and good-naturedly placed himself on his haunches on a mat before me. His showy turban (for the usual sheepskin cap of the country would ill harmonize either with his face or devotion to the sex) was raised; and, after going through a small list of his cerebral properties, I exposed his chief ones with all the surprise I could counterfeit, which produced a burst of real and long-continued laughter at his expense, in which he heartily joined. With respect to the other, I need only say, that he mended very neatly part of my musical-box, which had been broken in the house of a family in the south, and which I little expected to have got repaired in Circassia.

Last night's supper has, as I said, been completely eclipsed by our dinner, or rather dinners, of to-day; for, besides Tshûrûgh, there is a younger person, named

Hatûgh Usûk, who also dwells in this hamlet with his family, and is associated with the other in trade, (it was he brought the Sanjak-sherîf from Constantinople,) and his lady, it appears, was resolved that her cookery should be displayed as well as that of the other household, and therefore we had to partake of two dinners, with an interval of only about half-an-hour—and two such dinners! I attempted for a while to keep count of the tables, but lost it, and my man told me afterwards that I saw only a portion, for many dishes were kept back, when it was discovered we did not eat heartily enough of all; but he says he saw the whole of both arrays displayed on the grass, and that one dinner consisted of forty-two, and the other of forty-five dishes. I am surprised our hostess did not contrive to get more correct intelligence of the number intended by the other. I thought I observed a grin of triumph exchanged among the active attendants, as they saw us latterly quite beaten, and picking morsels, for form's sake, from some of their choicest preparations, which we had no appetite to enable us to eat more of. The majority of our dishes were, pastry with meat, pressed curds or honey, and tortured into all possible forms.

Adûghûm, Thursday 25th.—Yesterday, soon after the much-desired end of our second dinner, I was mounted, as the day before, upon Mehmet Effendi's white charger, though the animal is not quite recovered from a musket-shot, and we set forth for this place, amid another general discharge of fire-arms, and accompanied by both our hosts, the son of one

of them, and their principal dependants. As we proceeded down the populous and cultivated glen, several of the proprietors rode out and joined us: others I saw preparing in all haste to follow; and when we came into a beautiful undulating valley of exceedingly rich meadows, our company—almost all well mounted, and all (but myself) well armed, now in close order passing through some lane or ford, and then spread abroad over a flowery field in the race, or mimic charges—produced equally gallant and varied effects. Our yesterday's journey was nearly due north in direction and about six hours in duration: the direction was now a little to the eastward of north. I was shown, to our left, the site of one of the very many bloody battles of last year. It must have been such to the Circassians, as the openness of the country must have given great effect to the cannon of the Russians; and that they also suffered very severely is sufficiently proved, by their having turned back from proceeding to Anapa, which seemed originally their intention, and further corroborated by the circumstances I have already mentioned of Williamineff having subsequently effected his passage of the Kûban only through the forbearance of the Circassians, upon his perjuring himself as to the war being at an end.

We rode for about four hours through this valley, or succession of valleys, the hills on both sides of which are low, especially to the north-west. The pasture everywhere was exceedingly rich, enamelled in many places profusely with tall blue and yellow flowers, while giant trees here and there showed what a luxuriant forest had formerly prevailed. Many

fields were well inclosed, and gave good promise of harvest; for the Circassians have not despaired of saving even this open part of their country, though they feel certain it is destined to be attacked again this year. The road, almost all the way, was excellent; and here and there I saw traces of the enemy in ashes of houses, camp-fires, &c. As we rode along, a person arrived with intelligence that another large detachment of Russian infantry (and less cavalry than last year, for the cavalry have been proved almost useless against the Circassians,) had crossed the Kûban and proceeded to the forts on the Abûn; and when we stopped to breathe our horses under the shade of a large tree, the mailed mollah came to take farewell of me, as the enemy had entered his neighbourhood, and it was necessary he should go forward in haste, to see to the safety of his family and effects. "I may fall," said he, "in the approaching battles, and never see you again in this world; but I hope God will grant you long life and happiness, for the exertions you are making for my country." I replied as suitably as I could, for the style of his address was grave and (like the circumstances) impressive; and gave him a case of English priming-powder to divide among his neighbours. On a rocky height, towards the north of these valleys, I was told there were ruins of an ancient castle, (Genoese as they are always called,) and the remains of another to the westward.

From the valleys we debouched upon a level plain not apparently so rich as the valleys, yet affording grazing to large herds of oxen and horses; beyond it northward the view terminated in what seemed

forest, but the skirts of it were open, and many houses and well-inclosed fields were to be seen on both sides.

We had not advanced far when, passing the dwelling of Mensûr Bey, said by all to be their best leader in battle, and to have, as it were, a charmed life, for he is covered with wounds; and of Hatukwoi, formerly, and I hope I may say still, the chief of Ghelenjík; we turned into the ample inclosure of the wealthy proprietor whose guest-house I now occupy. Our field was immediately filled with men and horses, for this is the place where the congress of deputies had been appointed to assemble, but a large number, they say, had just left it in consequence of the invasion of the Russians to the eastward. Our journey yesterday was of about five hours.

Thursday, 25th.—The arrival of another Englishman at Pshat having been generally known some days since, his not making his appearance so soon as was expected gave rise to great impatience among the numerous assemblage here, and has put me to my shifts to engage their attention as much as possible by debating and deciding upon such things as I thought least likely to be affected by any news he might bring. At length my resources have failed me, and some rather disagreeable things having been reported to me as having been said, I have sent off a second messenger to hasten his arrival. I have had occasion to remark here as elsewhere the constant observance paid to the gradations of rank — all the greater individuals having their respective places at debates and meals readily assigned and conceded them.

Luca, after having two or three invitations, has been to see the family of our host, and taken presents for two pretty girls in it. I gave one of our inmates, who was unwell, some pills to swallow, but so little idea had he of any thing of the kind, that he chewed them and declared them very nasty.

Friday, 26th.—Yesterday, about mid-day, just as we were going to dine, word was brought me, amid great bustle, that the other Englishman approached; firing of pistols ensued, and going out I saw a great cavalcade enter our field, with my countryman (Mr. L——), and a gay silk Circassian standard in the midst. After we had dined, mutually communicated our news, and agreed upon what was best to be done under all circumstances, we accepted an invitation to go out and speak to the congress, which was assembled on the green in great force. Mats and cushions were laid on the grass for us, the new national banner waved over us, a small space was left for air, and around this there was a dense mass of Circassian warriors, from grey-beards to boys, and all the neighbouring trees were loaded with them. Proceedings were about to begin, when there was a cry from the rear, and immediately those in the circle behind the inner one (which was composed entirely of old men or persons of the first rank) seated themselves also. Those behind stood on their knees, and thus a pretty large number was gratified by sight as well as sound; while by far the largest portion had to be content with the latter. Our proceedings commenced by an expression on the part of the assembly of their eagerness to learn if Mr. L—— had brought them any intelligence

from Constantinople. Such as he had was communicated to them, and followed up by exhortations from the chiefs to the whole assemble to exert themselves to make a well-combined and vigorous defence in the present campaign. Mensûr made a short and energetic speech, the chief purport of which was to state how the Turks had betrayed and deserted them, and to show the necessity for the English coming quickly to their aid, if they meant to do so at all, because the supply of powder here is quite inadequate to a protracted defence. Others also spoke, and the results of the debate were an expression of great satisfaction on the part of the Circassians at what they had heard, and of their determination to use their greatest efforts to bring as many men into the field as possible, and to do their utmost to impede the operations of the Russians. We then retired to our own house, and the Circassians to another part of the green, when a long and animated debate was held by them upon the ways and means of the present campaign, and upon letters they had received from Sefir Bey. These letters afforded most opportune confirmation of the general tenour of our communications; and they contained instructions from Sefir Bey, (at the instance, as was said, of the English ambassador) with regard to an embassy which was to be sent to the Russian general, proposing peace on a mutual engagement not to commit depredations on each other's territories, England becoming guarantee for the fidelity of the Circassians. This affair was arranged, and three persons selected accordingly as heralds, one of them being the younger merchant from Aghsmûg, who has

frequently been so employed before, and goes readily again, although the barbarian Russians fired upon him as he retired from his last mission! The Circassians say that a charmed life has been given him, because he brought them their Sanjak-sherîf. In these letters Sefir Bey bespeaks a kind reception for us from his countrymen, and that they should relax their national usages (wherein I know not) in our favour.

After the more important business of the day was over, I found it determined on that I must shift quarters, as those I was in, though very good, seemed to be thought not suitable: so I packed up and removed here with Mr. L—— to the best furnished house by far I have been in.

Our landlord is Kalabat-Okû Hatukwoi, hereditary chief of Ghelenjík, the reversionary interest in which place I would gladly pay him a good sum for, and take my chance of the speedy ejectment of the present incumbents; so convinced am I that England will act as humanity and self-interest so clearly prescribe. This chief is one of the most aspiring-looking persons I have seen in this country; and I have little doubt, from what I see of his household arrangements, that when this all-engrossing war is over he will be among the foremost to show an example in adding to the comforts and elegances of domestic economy.

By 8 o'clock this morning there were ranged along the sides of our large field here the horses of about ninety visiters, which showed a busy day might be expected—and such it has proved: but the busi-

ness lay principally among the chiefs, in arrangements for the approaching campaign, our only material part consisting in the reception of Hatûk-okû Seliman (of the noble *Yedig* fraternity), a leading chief from the province of Abazak, who has come to proffer the services of his neighbours in aiding in the war. We made him a present, and impressed upon him the necessity of a strong effort being made this year; and in illustration of the benefits of combined action told them of the Roman fasces, which seemed to produce an impression; for, like other Asiatics (as they may be classed), metaphor is in great use among them.

Throughout last night and this morning a great deal of cannon firing has been heard, and Prince Basti-kû Pshemaff (descended from the first settlers of Sûjûk), who seems to me to have more valour than discretion (yet he is among the most polite), has got quite impatient, and says it is a shame for them not to go to the scene of action. We replied that none need stay from it on our account against his will, and that we only waited the return of the heralds to go there also.

A little ago Luca, my Georgian servant, came running in, and said, "Here are two Poles just escaped from Abûn!" We desired to see them, and they were marshalled in, hot from travel, with their grey great-coats thrown over their shoulders, and great Russian boots on. One of them, whose face seemed to denote some anxiety, I found could speak German; and having questioned him in that language, while Luca talked Russian with the other,

we found their accounts corresponded in substance—viz. that the present army at Abûn (independently of the one arrived by sea at Ghelenjík) consists of 8,000 men and twenty-four pieces of artillery; and that there is this year a much larger proportion of infantry than last year. Our conversation was interrupted by their being called away to dinner, and upon expressing our hope that they would be well treated, one of the chiefs replied that they always did so by the Poles; that they admitted them to their tables, gave them but light labour to perform, and did not sell them to the Turks who trade to the coast without their own consent.

The country round this is almost flat, but then there are many thickets of oaks, &c., which must be to the advantage of the Circassian mode of warfare. The higher hills are about ten miles distant. The Adughûm is at present but a small stream, and where the water is deep in it, as well as most of the other streams, I have observed even among the mountains and in this dry weather, that there is a good deal of alluvium suspended, so that the bottom cannot be seen; which proves, so far, the general richness of the soil.

Shepsugû, May 28.—On Friday afternoon we rode over to this beautifully seated hamlet in about four hours; for the first half of which our road lay among woods, corn-fields, and hamlets, by a gentle ascent: and the last over small hills well wooded with oak, and a good deal cultivated, many charmingly seated hamlets presenting themselves, especially as we came on the banks of the beautifully winding

mountain-stream Sheps, on which this hamlet stands. On our way through the hills two old men of our numerous escort learned, for the first time, that a son of each had just fallen in a skirmish with the Russians, in consequence of which news the party halted on a little hillock; and, turning up the palms of their hands, uttered a short prayer for the deceased. I tried to find out, by the expression of features of the old men of our company, which were the two who had suffered this bereavement, but I saw no recognisable indications; which corroborated so far what I have been often told, that the Circassians, instead of grieving for relatives who fall in the Russian war, rather envy them their martyrdom. On the side of the road opposite this house is a newly-made grave, inclosed within strong wooden rails, where the father of the family we now lodge with was lately interred; and consequently before entering the guest-house our party formed a circle on the green before the door, and again said the prayer for the departed—his eldest son, a very graceful lad of fourteen, standing by—after which several of the chiefs who were present embraced him affectionately. The more I see of these people the more I admire and love them. Of the beautiful scenery hereabouts I shall say nothing, in the hope that the sketch I have made may convey a somewhat better idea of it. On Tuesday night there was a good deal of cannon firing, but since that there has been no more heard, and we learn that the Russians, after some fighting by the way (to what extent I don't know, but there have just been shown me the riband

and medals of a Russian soldier slain), have reached Ghelenjík, and there joined the army brought by sea from Odessa. This junction is unfortunate, but how far the Circassians had it in their power to prevent it I have not at present the means of knowing.

May 29.—To-day the heralds returned with an insolent and blasphemous letter from the Russian commander Williamineff. I sent you by the messenger who carried the answer to Sefir Bey's letter, a hurried translation I made of its contents on their being read over to us, and of the reply that has been sent. You will not fail to observe in General Williamineff's letter the attempt to fix the Circassians as still subjects of the Sublime Porte, and as rebels to its authority, but not to that of Russia. I suspect that the general and the minister will prove to be as much at cross-purposes on this subject, as the admirals and the minister were on the grounds of seizure in the case of the Vixen.

Some future Circassian historian will be posed in searching for the answer to this document, amid their archives, as the only copy of it Mehmet Effendi has kept are some scattered notes on the back of another letter. He says he wrote and inclosed their answer in abundance of paper, as if that and other articles of the sort were plentiful among them, while the contrary is the case.

I have learned one valuable fact this morning, which I have no doubt will be fully appreciated by those who take an interest in arresting the general progress of the Russians—viz. that the Kabardans (the prime Circassian stock), who have long been in

some degree subject to them, and have, of late at least, contributed recruits to their armies, have now refused to do so, because they have learned that Englishmen are here, and that England is about to interfere for the independence of Circassia. Luca tells me Mensûr Bey was in tears to-day at news of the death of a warrior, who he said was equal to thirty ordinary men. He and nine others attacked a body of 150 Cossacks, among whom he rushed alone, sabre in hand, but fell after having slain only three.

During the long debates which took place to-day in congress on the letters, the retainers of the chiefs amused themselves (as they had done on former occasions) with "putting the stone," under a broiling sun. The stone weighed about five okes (fourteen pounds), and they pitched it (without a race) fifty-one feet; yet this violent exercise seemed to make none of them perspire. I have made the same remark when men on foot were keeping up with our horses, on the most difficult mountain-paths. For me the exercise of writing is enough to make me perspire; and the ingress of air by my (foot square) window is barred by the throng of gazers. If I go out to write in the shade, matters are little mended; a curious circle immediately thrusts itself "between the wind and my nobility;" and no sooner have I got one set to remove, by allowing it a peep, than another takes its place. But the congress is at an end, and I hope for some respite from such crowds, at least till a week hence, when another and a greater meeting is appointed to take place.

LETTER VI.

BREAKING UP OF THE CONGRESS.—RESIDENCE IN THE UPPER VALLEYS OF ABÛN AND PSHAT.

ANKHOR, *Wednesday, 31st May.*

MY DEAR ——. On Monday afternoon we set out from the picturesque and beautiful valley of the Sheps; and having traversed the hill on its eastern side, which is pretty hgh and covered with fine forest, we came upon the still more beautiful and rich valley of the Shebiz. It appeared appropriated and cultivated throughout. We crossed it and its eastern woody hill in a north-easterly direction, and stopped awhile at one village (or rather hamlet, as they all are) on the small stream Shépsugû, till our chiefs had paid their respects to the family of a chief who had just died, in consequence of wounds received in opposing the Russians a few days ago, when some of his retainers were severely wounded; and at another till they served us some refreshment on the grass. Here a wedding was being celebrated, many of both sexes were assembled; and after we had left I learned that there had been a talk of having the females to perform a dance before us, which to my regret had been deemed inconsistent with the gravity of our mission and the dignity of the station assigned us—"Then, happy low, lie down," &c.

The crossing of another wooded hill brought us upon the valley of the Waff, which stream is still

smaller than the two last named.—Here, although quite unexpected, our large party was heartily received by one Jambolet (said to be a very brave and active warrior), whose hamlet, seated half-way up the eastern hill of the valley, betokened the wealth of its proprietor by its well-finished buildings and ample enclosures for pasture and agriculture. Our supper consisted of a great array of dishes, although about the half of what had been prepared had been sent to some neighbouring houses for Shamuz and others, who had gone there for greater accommodation. We have news this evening of another sortie and foray from Anapa, but of no material consequence.

Yesterday, after an early and ample dinner, we set forth for this place accompanied by our host; and having ascended on our way a high and well-wooded hill, we got view of the splendid plain of the Kûban, stretching on the north and east as far as the horizon, and terminating to the west in gradually ascending hills. But objects of more immediate interest lay beneath us; viz.—the valley of the Abûn with its two recently erected Russian forts. This valley has been well chosen as an intersection of the hostile country; for although it terminates toward the west in the somewhat difficult defile where, as I mentioned above, the Circassians last year made a strong stand against their invaders, the valley expands rapidly and considerably to the north. At the commencement of this expansion is the first fort of some twelve guns, within whose range a few cattle were grazing. On both sides of it are heights from

which it appeared to me practicable to destroy it in a very short time. To the westward of north at a distance of about five miles from this fort (called Nicolaefski) stands that of Abûn, on the long gentle slope of the hill we descended. So far as I could see, its site seemed well chosen and not commanded by any height within cannon-range. It seemed a complete square of about two hundred yards, enclosed by a low sod parapet and a fosse, within which appear some substantial wooden barracks, &c. It is said that it is defended by twenty pieces of cannon and two thousand men, half of whom are Poles.

The valley of the Abûn is at present destitute of inhabitants; but the ruins of fences and houses show that it has had plenty; and the loss of its agriculture must have been to them a great one, were there not still plenty of unoccupied land, as I have yet no where seen such rich vegetation. In many places the graminaceous plants reached half-way up the saddle girths; and, in some few, still higher.

The Abûn is the largest stream next to the Adughûm we have passed. After fording it we made a slight curve towards the fortress, and here, without thinking much of cannon-range, I wished to stop to examine the fort through a glass, but the Circassians requested me to proceed a little further for that purpose; because, if we stopped at this place, the Russians would certainly open their guns upon us. Yet I saw still nearer to the fort some Circassians who were said to be employed gathering the grass of the valley. I did not dispute the point, as may be supposed; and, going a little further, we came to a

rising ground where we found a fire, water, and some men, who are constantly stationed there as an outlook on the garrison of the fort. Here we dismounted and leisurely surveyed the enemy. A little beyond this, we came to a mound about eighty feet high, which seemed to me artificial, probably the ancient tomb of some great chief; and, a little further on, to a village, whose inhabitants still remained in their dwellings, though so near the fort and the scene of the late invasion. Here we again dismounted for mid-day prayers, during which we ghiaours got hold of two Polish deserters, who willingly answered all our inquiries about the Russians and their forts.

The rest of our six-hours' ride thither was through forest, interspersed with grazings, corn-fields, and hamlets; but this forest has few large trees in it, being chiefly composed of young ones, or of shootings from the roots of former trunks,—for the hundred years of Russian war seem to have restored to the dominion of nature vast tracts of this plain that were formerly cultivated. At Ankhur (for the first time I have witnessed such an occurrence) some hesitation was shown about receiving our party. On explanation, I found that our host, during the late invasion, had sent off his bedding, &c. to the hills for security; and, our coming being unexpected, he feared he could not accommodate us properly. There seemed some reason in this demur; yet Shamuz' son, Noghaï, made his young features express to me all the contempt of which they are

capable—so inherent and high are their notions here of the duties of hospitality! We find no lack of food, however, and the mutton is exceedingly fat and good.

Word has just arrived that more troops have crossed the Kûban, and that the Ghelenjík army has advanced upon Pshat. The former, therefore, are supposed to be intended as a diversion to keep the people of this district from going to the aid of their countrymen on the coast: but Hatukwoi and some others have, notwithstanding, left for that purpose.

While at Shepsegû, we learned, one afternoon, that a council was being held to raise a subscription to buy horses for us and our servants: we put a stop to this by insisting on being allowed to pay for them ourselves; and, after a little amicable sparring, we carried our point, nominating Mensûr, and one or two other judges of horse-flesh, to see that we got good cattle. The consequence is, that Mr. L—— has gotten one of the strongest, and I one of the handsomest and fleetest, horses I have seen, and for about seven and nine pounds respectively. Mine is a dark grey, and was the favourite horse of the Prince of Semez, who is as proud as he is poor, and now demurs about accepting payment. I hope he will yield this point, otherwise I must return the horse, and shall be sorry to lose him. He is without fault —save a little shying—and as lively and willing as he is gentle. To look after the horses we have hired a servant who is noble by descent; but he has no longer either property or relatives, and must accept

service—horsekeeping, however, is considered much the least degrading.

This afternoon Mr. L. and I took a ride to the field of two battles; one of last year, which lasted several days, and the other, which occurred about ten days since. It is a level open plain, bordered by wood and low hills on the north and east. The infinite superiority of the Circassian cavalry must give them great advantage on clear level ground; but I question if this be not counterbalanced by the execution artillery must do there; and the mere circumstance of the Circassians having disputed such ground for many days should serve to prove their extraordinary courage.

On our way we met a mailed chief, of very warlike port, who, with his retinue, dismounted to salute us (of him more anon), and were joined by a young man I had observed before, as remarkable even among his countrymen for his active and powerful form. We were informed he had lately captured a Russian standard and five soldiers. "And what did you do with them?" "Sold them, to be sure!" Here is one great inducement to go to battle, as a brave active man may stock his farm with labourers, or make a little capital by sale of his prisoners. Their market value, however, at present is only from *3l.* to *5l.*, which may show that the supply is large. This young man showed us, beside the excellent management of his horse, and the uncovering, cocking and firing of his gun at a bonnet on the ground while at full gallop, another feat I had not before seen; viz. leaping out of

his saddle on to the ground; and, at the same instant almost, uncovering his rifle or unsheathing his sabre. If the Russian soldiers here are no better men than those I have seen at Sevastopol, &c. they must, individually, be as children in the hands even of the generality of the Circassians.

On our return we found that the chief we had met was Tshûrûk-okû Tûgûz, and that he was in waiting to pay his respects. He has been to the interior, and he brings us most unexpected and welcome news; viz. that he met there some of the chiefs of some of the eastern provinces, which Russia has occupied and hitherto kept from acting; and that they told him they had refused the Russian general a supply of 1000 cavalry, in consequence of having heard that England is about to interfere in favour of Circassia; and that if Mr. L. or I would only go there or even send some of our clothes, or anything else, to prove Englishmen were here, it would be sufficient to rouse the whole country against the Russians. But the most extraordinary part of his news is, that these chiefs have received a letter from the Noghais (on the other side of the Kûban) saying that a similar requisition of cavalry, viz. thirty from each village, has been made upon them, and that they too, having heard of England's interposition, are determined to resist, and wish to co-operate with the Circassians. I don't recollect if I told you that, at Indar-okû's at Pshat, I met with a person from Khazan*, who said he had been deputed by his countrymen to come to Circassia and see if the report they had heard that

* One of the Tatar Khanats long since subdued by Russia.

England was going to aid her in establishing her independence were true. He said he had waited twenty months to see some proof to be depended upon; and if such were given, he had no doubt of the whole of his countrymen immediately rising in arms against the Russians! See what a mighty conflagration of all Russia's structures and designs may be made, if the spark of liberty here be duly cherished!

This afternoon I have been shown a rifle made here, whose calibre is such, that two of my fingers together can just enter the barrel, which is very long and strong. It must do good execution. Cannon and even musket-firing having been heard here throughout the day, our horses and servants are bivouacked round a great fire at the end of the house, ready for a start, if necessary: and we have been cautioned not to go far from our hamlet unescorted, as the Russians are supposed to have offered a reward for our capture.

Upper Abûn, Monday, 5th June.—We staid for three days with the host at Ankhur, who demurred, and then we moved a little distance westward to the hamlet of three brothers, in a richer portion of the plain, whose clumps of stately oaks, verdant meadows, and heavy crops of corn, brought England vividly before me. Mr. L. has frequently exclaimed, "This is just like England!" The climate also appears very similar. The heavy dews over night, by their evaporation each morning, give for some hours a delicious freshness to the air. This family appear to be wealthy, judging by their large herds

of cattle, horses and brood-mares. During our three days' stay there, cannon were again frequently heard; but they seemed to be little heeded amid business of more immediate interest; viz., the deliberating upon and writing answers to the letters of Sefir Bey, and the reception of a deputation from the northern portion of Abazak, sent for the purpose of offering to assist, and concert operations with, the people of Shapsuk and Notwhatsh. The chiefs of these two districts, who are here, wished some effect given to an interview with us: mats and cushions were therefore spread for us under a tree in the large outer park—the national banner was brought forth, and planted beside us, and it was then announced to the Abazaks, who were in waiting in another park, that we were ready to receive them. As they drew nigh, the congregation around us opened on one side into a vista, through which were to be seen advancing Mehmet Effendi, hand in hand with another young judge (one of the deputies) of very agreeable and intelligent features; and behind them, some eight or ten of the older chiefs and dependants. After they had been formally introduced, had shaken hands, and seated themselves on the grass, our news were communicated, and were followed by some pretty sharp observations on our part, as to the fatal consequences that must result to the interior provinces themselves, unless they immediately took means to afford more effectual assistance to those on the frontier during the present campaign. The chief of the latter had requested us so to speak, and it appeared to produce the desired effect, for a portion of the deputation remained to

take part immediately in the hostilities, and the rest returned home to bring forward their forces.

One of these chiefs, a remarkably vigorous and lively man, who had not arrived in time to be present at the public interview, had afterwards a private one, when the same observations were made to him; to which he jokingly replied, that we should be detained in the country till we saw and owned that the co-operation between the people of the three provinces was complete and effectual. Among other matters it was debated, whether I should proceed to the interior with some of these Abazaks, (Mr. L—— having resolved on proceeding towards the Russian army); but our friends here appearing averse to such an arrangement for the present, I agreed to defer the visit.

All congressional matters having at length been disposed of, we all set out on Sunday forenoon, after an early meal, towards Pshat. Our route lay up the valley of the Ankhur, which has pleasing scenery, and a good deal of cultivation, and, having halted on the banks of the stream for mid-day prayers, we turned from its banks, and struck up a rather steep and high mountain on our right, covered with very stately forest, through which we toiled our way for some time, glad, however, to be sheltered from a broiling sun. At length, as we descended, we obtained a view through the trees of an exceedingly beautiful valley, with undulations of the richest pasture, corn-fields and woodland, and bordered by hills clothed with lofty forests. On inquiring the name of this enchanting vale, I learned it was another

portion of that of Abûn, whose exceeding fertility I have already spoken of, but which I then supposed to terminate near Ghelenjík; I find however that it extends a long way to the eastward, beyond Pshat. We turned a short way down it to the west, and halted for the day at a hamlet, within some five or six miles of Nicolaefski. I attempted a sketch of this hamlet and its neighbouring scenery, but was so hurried and so annoyed by heat and lookers-on, that I fear little idea of the beauties of the place will be gained from it. Two buildings in front of our guest-house, which I saw frequented by several boys, attracted my curiosity; and I was agreeably surprised to hear that one of them is a school-house, the other is a mosque. Youths are here boarded during their education in reading and writing Turkish. I learn that there are many such educational establishments throughout the country.

This morning, after an early meal, we left the last-mentioned hamlet, and, in three to four hours, reached that in which we now are. The whole of this ride was up the valley of the Abûn, and it appears to extend as far beyond where we now are. In its course it forms four or five great curves, besides an infinity of minor meanderings; its stream is one of the largest, most lively, and limpid I have crossed in this excursion; its bordering mountains are of great variety of form and height, and richly clothed with forests, interspersed with patches of bright green pasture, while its surface undulates throughout, and presents at every turning alternations of magnificent woodlands, luxuriant herbage, corn-fields, and nume-

rous hamlets. Altogether I have not yet seen, among the many lovely valleys of this country, one that has pleased me more—always excepting that of Terampse, near Mamaï.

Wednesday, 7th June.—We are here at the hamlet of an elderly and sage-looking person, not noble, yet said to be in good circumstances, although (judging by our tables) I should suppose them to be inferior to those of most of the persons we have yet visited, as our fare (rather to my satisfaction) is more simple. We presume, however, that our being put up here is merely a temporary expedient, until the chiefs make some other arrangement for us. They all left for Pshat soon after our arrival on Monday, after an animated debate upon the present campaign, during which Mr. L. pressed the point of being permitted to accompany them, and take part in any enterprise that might be determined on. But they resolutely withstood this, saying that, at first, while things are somewhat unarranged, and very many strangers from the interior constantly arriving, to whom our mission has not been explained, it might be dangerous for us to be on the field, as, if amid the haste and confusion that may occur in their first operations, we should get separated from those we are known to, we might be fired at or cut down as enemies. In their irregular mode of warfare, each chief at the head of his dependants attacking the enemy as he sees favourable opportunities occur, this advice may probably be just. We wish much to get a sight of what is going on at Pshat; but must restrain our curiosity for a day or two at least, when some of the chiefs have

promised to return with a report of proceedings and to make further arrangements about us.

I am sorry to say that on our way here we learnt that the Russians had succeeded in reaching Pshat without much loss, owing chiefly, I believe, to the deficiency of powder among the people throughout this neighbourhood. We were told also that a miraculous meteor had appeared in the heavens above them, forming a semicircle, and exploding. Fortunately it has been construed by the Circassians into an omen of the destruction of their invaders. The probability is, that it was a rocket sent up by Williamineff, to announce his arrival at Pshat to the commander at Ghelenjík, but this solution we keep to ourselves. We have just been told that the Hadji Ghuz Beg, whom I met at Jûbghe on a mission to call his countrymen to the war, had just performed *alone* a most daring exploit at the other end of this valley. He had observed the ground where the soldiers of Nicolaefski brought out the cattle of the garrison to graze under the guns; and, watching his opportunity, rushed upon the guard (when their arms were stacked I presume) and succeeded in killing two, and bringing off one prisoner besides nine muskets!

Yesterday we had a visit from Sultan Khûrghûn Gheri, who is a relation of the Sultan of Turkey. He lives in this neighbourhood, and he spoke very despondingly of the affairs of this country; but it seemed to me that his phlegmatic constitution was in great measure the cause of his taking so melancholy a view. He showed us, for what reason I know not,

a Russian passport with which two years ago he had come here from Constantinople by Anapa.

In the evening, while our attendants and some of the men of this hamlet were seated on our plat of grass, two of their two-stringed violins were produced, and among the eight or nine men present there were four who played very well. Almost every guest-house appears to be furnished with a violin. Two of the songs had some very poetical ideas and subjects. The first, sung to a highly plaintive melody, was composed in memory of a young man who was married last year, but a Russian inroad having taken place on his wedding-day, he went immediately to battle, and was slain. The other was composed in consolation (it may be said) of Tshorat-okû Hamuz, a very brave old tokav, who was the principal spokesman at the debate on Monday, and who is gone with the rest against the Russians at Pshat. In a very bloody engagement with the Russians last year he lost *four brothers, four sons,* and was himself very severely wounded. He is quite lame of one leg.—The only thing I have heard at all analogous to the music of these songs is the chanting in church service.

The temperature of late has been quite chilly throughout the night, and in the mornings and evenings a fire has been decidedly a comfort.

Fired with the ambition of seeing beyond the hills in front of our dwelling here, (which bar the view toward Pshat,) Mr. L. and I got a person to accompany us to-day to the top of one of them, about 1200 to 1400 feet high. Almost to this height we

found a road, evidently much used both by horses and cattle; and we observed a large herd of the latter grazing on an adjoining hill. The pasture, even at this altitude, was excellent, indeed as rich as any I have seen; and from the hill on which we were, a high undulating plateau extended for a considerable distance to the south-east, affording as fine grazing for a large stock of flocks and herds as any Cheviot farmer could desire.

The view from this summit was more than an ample recompense for the trouble in reaching it. Before us, at the distance of from twelve to fifteen miles lay a wide expanse of the Black Sea; to the right were the valley of the Heyderbeh, behind that of Ghelenjík; and the ridge of lofty hills that separates them. I saw for the first time a small straight valley (called Mezip) which sends a streamlet to the sea a little to the eastward of Ghelenjík. At a right angle to this valley runs that of the Sûtshûk, the whole extent of which was visible from where we stood, and both valleys had acquired additional interest since our former passage, from the circumstance of the Russian army having, in the interim, made its way by them to Pshat. We had hoped to have seen the latter valley also, or at least, a portion of it, from this eminence, but intervening heights rendered it invisible.

The sides of this and all the adjoining hills are clothed with deep forests. The wood through which we passed consists principally of beeches of great height and girth. At every hamlet here (as well indeed as elsewhere throughout the country) gardens are to be seen well-inclosed and stocked with cabbage,

onions, scarlet and other beans, hemp, lint, tobacco, and often the much-prized nitre-plant. We have now occasional showers. The mid-day sun is but little hotter than it is when unclouded in England at this season; and, upon the whole, I see as yet—with the exception of more fine weather—little difference from our climate. The vegetation also seems to present but little novelty, as I fear the collection of plants I have made will prove. Among the birds also I recognise all those most common with us, such as the blackbird, thrush, goldfinch, groundlark, and common sparrow. The nightingale is occasionally heard here. Wood-pigeons are numerous, and seem in fine condition; but this I must as yet take on trust, for although the Circassians have not, like the Turks, any superstitious prejudice against killing pigeons (as I found to-day on inquiry), yet they seem to have a game-law against their being killed at this season when they are engaged with their young. Abundance of crested and other woodpeckers are to be seen; but I have not been able to see a single pheasant, quail, or partridge. I am told the two former are numerous on the plain of the Kûban. At Sûjûk, and elsewhere, I have seen a remarkably beautiful species of wild duck, a specimen of which I shall endeavour to send home for stuffing. Eagles are frequently to be seen, and all the hawk tribe abound in the absence of the fowling-piece and small shot, and the consequent abundance of their prey. Hares, from the same cause, are abundant everywhere; and foxes, as might be expected, are not wanting. Wild boars and fallow-deer are scattered

throughout all the larger forests, but the rifle prevents them multiplying.

But the community of ants has amused my many leisure hours (you may think I reckon too much on yours) as much as any. Here, among many others, is one species about half an inch in length. Their hill, built of pieces of straw and clay, is fully a foot high, and has many lanes of approach through the grass, completely cleared of every impediment, and as well trodden as any highway in the country, particularly the principal one, much broader than the rest, which in two instances I have traced for more than twenty feet, terminating in little thickets of grass and plants, where probably most food is to be found.

If I have now been writing trifles, you must blame Tshûskha, a judge (and penman of course), who has sat looking closely over me for some time, thus obliging me (as every trifle about us is so attentively observed), for the character of my country's intellect, to show no hesitation in my composition.

I write at present in the house of the atalic of the Sultan Khûrghûn Gheri, and in the near neighbourhood of that of the latter, which must be convenient for him, as he has gotten into the habit of putting himself to the trouble of riding daily to the hamlet we are in, to spend his idle time (a tolerably large portion of the whole) beside us. He is one who does not bother himself about state or even military affairs; and this latter circumstance, combined with his Russian passport, makes him, as we have been informed this morning, suspected among his country-

men, of traitorous inclinations. Yet weak as he seems to be, I do not think, if he had formed any *designs*, he would have gratuitously shown the passport to us of all people in the world. The suspicions entertained about this person, like some other facts, seem to prove only the extreme jealousy with which these people watch for the safety of their independence. We were moved here yesterday by an order from the council of the chiefs assembled at Pshat, upon their learning (not from us) that our entertainment at our last quarters (half an hour's ride from this) was not (in the opinion of the informants) sufficiently good. I believe it was in keeping with the host's circumstances.

Hadji-oghlû Mehmet, the lively Abazak chief I spoke of, called on us yesterday, on his return from Pshat to his own province, whence he promises to bring shortly a force of his countrymen. We gave him some presents, to prove to them Englishmen were here in their country's cause. So far as we can learn, the Circassians have only a small corps of observation in front of the Russian army, and this perhaps is at present all that they can well do, as the army is in an open valley, where its cannon can be used with effect. But it appears that the impatience of the Circassian spirit occasionally seeks vent in some desperate effort. We were told yesterday evening by those who have returned from Pshat, that Tshûrûk-okû Tûghûz and Jambolet (two of their five "mightiest men of valour") had by surprise broken in, sabre in hand, among a body of 500 Russians; and when their countrymen in despair

had given them up as slain, they returned without a wound, having made many of their adversaries "bite the dust." Yet I think I perceive a growing disposition among some of the Circassians to wait and see what is going to be done for them by England and the other six powers—for here, as in Turkey, the powers of Christendom, like her champions of old, are always rated at *seven;* and a report seems to have arrived, whence we know not, that other governments besides that of England have interfered in their favour. This dependence (caused chiefly by the communication from Sefir Bey) is to be deplored, and we have striven and will strive against its being entertained to a greater extent than as a source of encouragement; yet its prevalence cannot be wondered at here, where for ten years two provinces, inconsiderable in point of extent, have made a stand against the energies and wiles of the largest, most despotic, and least scrupulous empire of Europe, possessed too of all the modern military science of Europe. In another respect, also, the contest is most unequal; inasmuch as it is the chiefs and prime portion of the population of these provinces who yearly go forth to battle and are yearly cut off, whereas Russia may send here for ten years more, and from among her "million of bayonets," thousands on thousands of Poles whom she wishes diminished in number, or of her native slave soldiers, whom she values but as so many fighting machines. Nor has this country had as yet either time or opportunity to form a national system; for the idea of such a thing did not exist till it was "called into existence" three

years ago by "Daûd Bey" during his chivalrous visit of three days; and although it has been universally and enthusiastically adopted, the pressure of the war has latterly been too severe to admit of any mechanism of government being contrived, or at least put into effective operation. It must also be borne in mind that only about fifty years have elapsed since intestine feuds and wars (like those of the clans of Ireland and Scotland) have been put an end to, and some of the law-suits, or compositions, consequent upon these discords have been protracted (as if they had been in the Chancery of England) down to a very recent period. Prince Pshemaff got payment not long since of 200 head of cattle, as liquidation of a fine for the homicide of his great-grandfather. The fraternities or societies I have spoken of seem to have greatly contributed of late in introducing the system now prevalent, of fines, instead of blood for blood. I have no doubt the dear-bought experience of the Circassians, both within and without, will speedily produce good fruit, if opportunity be given.

This afternoon we have been called to a council upon one of two persons from the interior, caught in an attempt to communicate with the fortress of Anapa. Nine documents were found on the prisoner: three in Turkish and six in Russian. What their contents are I know not yet; but I have gotten them into our custody till the chief judge and some other chiefs be assembled, and till some one be procured who can read Russian. Meantime the delinquents are kept in close custody. They are known to have been at

Ghelenjík, on their way. Wind to-day from S.E.; rainy and chill.

We were informed, that this morning 300 Circassians—though almost all destitute of powder—approached the fort of Nicolaefski, to challenge the garrison to come out, and fight; but the latter declined doing so, and fired the cannons upon the challengers.

This evening the Sultan (as he is called), Khûrghûn Gheri, entertained us with accounts of the wondrous feats of his father, who was "foremost in a thousand fights," without ever receiving a wound. His equestrian exploits were equally remarkable; but they were finally fatal to him, as he died of a fall—not from, but—with his horse. The distance of time at which his deeds occurred seems, as usual, to have magnified them; therefore I shall not tell the breadth of the river he was said to have leaped across, and the numbers he alone put to flight. His favourite weapons were his sabre and an iron mace (for cracking helmets); and, as others besides his son say he was a remarkably brave and powerful warrior, I was much gratified on being presented with his mace, which I accepted with the less compunction, that the valour also of the race seems to have perished when the horse fell. I have commenced a collection, which I purpose completing, of all the peculiar weapons of this extraordinary people, and which I shall do my best to get safely transported to England.

Upper Pshat, Tuesday 13th.—On Sunday night, accompanied by the Sultan and others, we set out from Upper Abûn for this place, which is within

three hours' ride of the Russian camp at Pshat, and as it is a small retired glen, it appears to have been well chosen as a place of retreat for some goods brought under charge of Mr. L., by the last vessel to Pshat. The morning of our setting out was misty, (the weather had been misty and cold for a day or two previously,) and as the path chosen for us lay nearly over the summit of one of the highest hills in the neighbourhood, we saw for some time, amid the clouds that enveloped us, nothing of this nether world, but the narrow ridge we travelled along. On beginning to descend, however, we got from beneath the cloud that "kerchiefed" the mountain-top, and a magnificent view of mountain wood and ocean opened beneath us. But perhaps I have already dwelt at sufficient length on the features of this part of the country.

We halted at the first valley we came to, for prayers, and a hot lunch. There, for the first time, I was shown the plant from which they make a substitute for nitre. It is cultivated for that purpose in the garden of the hamlet. Here, also, we found a large mortar for making gunpowder, the pestle of which was worked by the foot, having a long pliant branch of a tree as a spring.

In passing the valley of the Sûtshûk, and the defile at the end of it, we saw abundant traces of the march of the Russians, in sheds made of branches of trees, erections for camp-kettles, and pathways for the artillery, made by their pioneers. They appeared to have slept at one place in order of battle; and they have certainly done some temporary good in

improving the road through the defile. This march is said to have cost them 500 men, though very few Circassians were assembled upon its track, and the neighbouring country is not very populous.

On Sunday evening it was found we could not reach this place; and a debate was in progress upon the possibility of our doing without food till next morning, and upon the eligibility of choosing before sunset soft sleeping ground at the base of the adjoining hills, when our Turkish servant (a merchant from Semez, who had come with me, and has been hired by us) bethought himself of a hamlet, where he had friends, in a glen not far off. He took us there; and we had good quarters, and still better entertainment. The garden of this hamlet was in excellent order; and their hemp the best among the many good crops I have seen.

Mr. L.'s errand to the hamlet we are now at was to look into the conduct of a hadji from Constantinople, to whom he had intrusted the disposal of some goods shipped by a friend of his at Constantinople, as an experiment: mine was to get exercise, and a sight of the Russian camp. On our way here yesterday morning, we found Haûd-okû Mensûr, old Kehrî-kû Shamuz, and some other chiefs from the north, assembled under a tree, in a field, about an hour's ride from Pshat, where they have stationed themselves for some days, watching the enemy, and sleeping at night with no other shelter than we found them under.

Here, immediately on our arrival, a council was held, and the first subject discussed was that of the

suspected persons ; and, since information had arrived from the chief judge that the letters found upon them were of a traitorous purport, as they related to intelligence found to have been carried on between an Abazak princess, who had fallen into the hands of the Russians, and become the wife of one of their generals, and some persons in her native neighbourhood who had listened to her corrupt counsel, it was decided that the prisoners deserved to be shot forthwith. Some of those present were therefore deputed to go northward to see the affair brought to an issue. The next subject discussed was the conduct of the hadji, which was found to be so equivocal that Mr. L. expressed his wish to have the property from Constantinople taken out of his hands, and placed in those of some one trustworthy. Hûssein, a merchant of Semez, who had come with us, was pointed out as a fit person ; and, as the chiefs said they would be responsible for his honesty, and felt glad at being thus enabled to prevent the disgrace of the property of strangers being tampered with in their part of the country, (a circumstance, they said, which never occurred before,) the transference was agreed on accordingly. We were then asked where we wished to go, and upon our replying that it was Mr. L.'s wish to take part in the warfare here, and mine to proceed to the interior, where I thought my services might be most beneficial, we were informed that Mr. L.'s remaining in this neighbourhood at present would not be advisable, as it had been determined that no large operation should be undertaken against the Russians at present, and only a watch kept upon their proceedings. In regard

to my proposal, the chiefs observed, that as they had arranged to proceed shortly to the interior, to hold a congress with the Abazaks, for the purpose of producing combined operations on a large scale against the time when the Russian army might be expected again to move, it would be best that we two should also go to that congress, to assist in rousing and encouraging the people as much as possible. This, then, was finally agreed on, and that we should, when our affairs here were finished, return to Semez, and remain at the house of Shamuz, till the chiefs were ready to start with us on the projected journey.

During this discussion two striking incidents occurred. We saw a litter, borne by four men and attended by many others, approaching towards us up the valley below. On learning that it contained a man who had been wounded that morning by a foraging party of the Russians, we went to meet it, and found a youth lying on his back apparently senseless with a frightful laceration of the groin by a cannon-shot. I had nothing with me but some adhesive plaister I had brought for them, and which I offered for dressing; but it was thought unnecessary, and those around seemed to make up their minds that it was all over with the sufferer. This is the first victim of war I have seen here, but I fear it will not be the last.

The other incident was the arrival at our place of debate of old Indar-okû Mehmet, on a young and lively horse, from which he dismounted so actively, and advanced towards us with so light a step (his waist tightly girt, and all his arms on), that, for

some time, all that I recognised was the likeness of his features to those of my centenarian friend, not believing it could possibly be himself. The chiefs all rose (as usual) on his approach; but the elders among them retired to another spot, to finish what they were then talking of (the affair of the traitors), and their reception of him, on the whole, convinced us that the distrust of this chief and his family, on account of their former dealings with Messrs. Scassi and De Marigny, is a strong and very general feeling. Scassi I am told attempted lately to correspond with the family, in favour of submission to Russia; but I have not heard of one single established fact to its discredit. Its reputation seems sacrificed by surmises or the falsehoods of former enemies.

Several of the chiefs attended us here yesterday, and the entertainment being at our expense (as the people are somewhat poor) and prepared by our servants, we acted the part of Circassian hosts by retiring to another house while our visiters ate.

Mensûr having said that several of those present had not powder to go against the Russians, I gave half of the little I happened to have with me to be divided among them, and he was instantly beset by a swarm of requisitionists. *Apropos* of swarms: I chanced to see a swarm of bees forming around a hive; and on approaching it, discovered the bee-yard, a large oval space securely hurdled around, and containing no less than sixty-seven hives, all tenanted; while many more are being prepared for new swarms. These hives are of wicker-work, covered with clay

hardened in the sun. I am told the honey is taken without the destruction of the bees.

The chiefs from the north have left us (all but a few of the most influential who form our escort) to prepare for the journey to the interior.

This morning we rode down to Pshat to see the Russian camp. The day was almost broilingly hot, and as the only road for about nine-tenths of the way lay over the broad channel of the Pshat composed of glaringly white stones, the sight of the enemy seemed dearly enough bought. We went for this purpose to the usual guard station of the Circassians, an eminence right in point of the camp and considerably within cannon range. An ancient tomb, such as several others to be seen in this part of the country, composed of five enormous slabs of stone, four upright and one laid upon them, formed here a partial shelter for us and a resting-place for our telescope*. We did not use it much for the former purpose lest our national character might have suffered, and while perhaps we were taking some little credit to ourselves for something like courage, what was my surprise to discover a single Circassian more than half way in advance of us, and approaching the camp still nearer! He continued doing so till it seemed to me he was within musket range of it, when he turned his horse to one side, and leisurely walked him right across the front of a plateau where I had counted seven pieces

* These tombs are about five feet high, and the covering stone is about nine feet long and six broad. In the front slab is a circular aperture sufficiently large for the admission of a child's head. Tradition is silent as to their origin.

G. Barnard, lith. From a Sketch by Jas. Stanislaus Bell Esqr.

Day & Haghe Lith.rs to the Queen.

ANCIENT TOMB IN THE VALLEY OF PSHAT.

of artillery. This was Tshûrûk-okû Tûghûz, mounted on his beautiful little white charger. I have spoken of an exploit he and Jambolet performed upon the Russians. He is a remarkably strong-made, tall man, full of life, fun, and activity; and as he slowly paced along, so distinct an object in the midst of an open field, I thought of our Cœur-de-Lion challenging the Saracens, yet I wished the scene at an end, for the interest it excited was too painful, especially as Tûghûz ("the wolf") and I had become very good friends.

During his survey of the camp he was joined by another Circassian (also on a white horse), and I was well pleased to see them, before I left the hill, returning from their exploit without having been made to pay dearly for its hardihood. The Russians seemed to be at dinner (in order of battle) at the time, which possibly was the cause of the two reconnoiterers not being fired upon. In the anchorage were a frigate, three brigs, and a lugger, and boats appeared to be busily employed between them and the beach. It is said that the fort they are about to erect is to be on the declivity of the hill to the west, so as to prevent the approach of vessels to the mouth of the river. Though this is not my country, I felt a pang (what then must old Indar-okû have felt?) on perceiving that the sacred forest, near the beach, where the cross stood, had all been cut down by the barbarians, save two or three venerable trees, whose days also may now be numbered.

LETTER VII.

RESIDENCE AT SEMEZ.

ZENU, *Friday*, 16*th*.

MY DEAR ——. We arrived in this lovely, rich, and little valley yesterday evening, and were to have set out this morning for Semez, but some of our horses had otherwise determined. Here there is no fear of theft, therefore they were left to graze all night unwatched and unstrapped about the legs, as the inclosure they were in was thought sufficient. It did not prove so however, and two of the best horses —those of Mr. L. and of Tshûrûk, were this morning missing. This created some alarm, but it was soon allayed by Tshûrûk's horse being found, and by a person arriving who reported that he had seen the other on a mountain, about five miles off, grazing with a herd of other horses. It was brought back this evening, and the man who brought it says, that all the people were up and active in assisting to recover the property of the *Englishman !*

Here is a Russian prisoner, a sharp-looking person, said to be an excellent artisan. He appears to be quite unconstrained, although said to have frequently attempted escape; but the difference of mental culture in him and the Circassians is very apparent, as their free address has degenerated in him into a familiarity which he will find very inconvenient if ever he return into his native slavery.

This valley (or rather glen) is not a couple of miles long, but its herbage, in depth and richness, equals any I have seen—a beetling cliff of white rocks, in small strata, closes it in towards the north. At about its centre, our host (atalik of one of the sons of Indar-okû, who had sent word that everything we wanted should be supplied,) showed us a mound on which a large tree had grown, and which he said had been the site of a Christian church, and that there was a cross on some of the stones. These stones, however, were so deeply enveloped in rank herbage that nothing was to be seen, but here and there the corner of one showing they had been wrought.

On our way yesterday we called on the Pshat family, at the place of residence they have been driven to by the Russian invasion of their valley. It is situated in the midst of an oak forest between two hills formed by the streams Tabeh and Sûmez (which when joined are called Pshat) into a sort of peninsula. We were piloted by Tshûrûk, son-in-law of Indar-okû, and having arrived in a grassy paddock were desired to wait there. Presently the old chieftain, his sons, and many attendants came forth from a thicket. Many apologies were made for receiving us in the open air, but it could not be otherwise, as they had not yet gotten any houses made, and they and their ladies and families were camped out for the present. Mats and cushions were brought and spread on the grass, and shortly after a hot lunch was served to us. During this time we had a good deal of conversation, chiefly with Noghaï, the eldest son, who is said to be sixty-five; but his animation,

athletic form, and carriage, give him all the appearance of one fifteen years younger.

He spoke with much spirit of the unjust suspicions they were subjected to, because they had once traded with Russia. He said they are living at present as it were under the edge of the sabre, although they had always borne their share in the war; and that their father also had, of late, repeatedly wished to go to battle, but had been prevented by them, on account of his age. He expressed the great satisfaction he had felt on learning that the chiefs had interfered for the protection of the goods of English merchants, which precedent he said might be the means of introducing, in other respects, more regularity into the affairs of commerce; and some such regulation he said was the more requisite, as the connexion which formerly existed between the chiefs and their dependants, and which had enabled the former to exercise some degree of control, had during the last war become in a great measure dissolved, so that the latter now moved where they pleased, without consulting their superiors. In this way he said the family of Prince Pshemaff (who sat by) had of late lost upwards of a thousand retainers. We have promised to require, at the approaching congress, that justice should be done this family; and we purpose cautioning the people generally against that error of being too credulous as to treachery, which did such mischief to the Poles during their late struggle for independence. Indar-okû was very grateful for our promise, and said, among other like expressions, "After God, you English!"

As Noghaï seems to think that an incident connected with the merchandise under Mr. L——'s charge may be cobbled into a ludicrous story by the Russians, if they come to hear of it, I believe I had better give you the facts of the case, that you may be prepared. The Hadji, being well acquainted with the trade of this country, was employed by the merchant at Constantinople to buy the goods, and for the same reason, the disposal of them here was left to him by Mr. L——. Among other proofs, however, which he soon gave of his bad intentions (his character here was previously suspected) was that of purchasing with part of the goods two slaves, a girl and a lad—contrary to express orders. By the laws of the Turks, no Christian can claim interest in Mussulman slaves, and the project of the Hadji seems to have been (other circumstances confirming this suspicion) to get the whole proceeds of the adventure appropriated to himself. When the resolution to take it out of his hands was communicated to him, he first begged humbly to be continued in charge; and then he seemed to be inspired with revenge. Yet his features (and he is the most beautiful old man, I think, I ever saw) were all the time dressed in smiles, and his behaviour affable, and apparently frank and open. Just as we were preparing to go and see the Russians, he entered, saying he heard they were advancing upon us, hoping, perhaps, to occasion a moving of the goods, or some confusion, by which he might profit; but he only frightened the Sultan home, and quickened our departure by exciting our desire to learn if the report were true. His

next move, however, (there appears scarce a doubt of its having been his) was more effectual. That evening I was alone in the guest-house, (Mr. L—— having preferred sleeping *al fresco*,) when Georgi, his Greek servant, rushed into it, snatched his pistols and sabre from the wall, and girded them on in such haste and excitement, that I had scarce a doubt the Russians were at hand. All, however, I could learn from him, in his bad Italian-French, was something about "famina;" and curiosity succeeding to fear, I sallied out for further explanation, and found the Hadji, the merchant Hûssein, the women (in their night-shifts), &c. &c., all in violent excitement and altercation about the female slave, who had just escaped to the hills. A son of our host was also absent, and the real question seemed to be, whether the escape was to be looked on as a simple love affair, resulting from the intercourse of these two young people during the past fortnight,—or, as a consequence of fears inspired into the girl's mind, it was generally supposed by the Hadji, of falling into the hands of the "Ghiaours." She had previously been eager to go to Stambûl, as the girls of the country generally are; and even if retained for the purpose of being sent there, she must at all events have gone under charge of a Mussulman. Tshûrûk was furious against the wily Hadji: he seized him twice by the beard; and, drawing his two-edged dirk, threatened to cut his head off, unless he told what had become of the girl. But these threats were of no more avail in leading to her capture, than was the rambling of Tshûrûk and Georgi, through the woods, for the

greater part of the night. Next morning, our host, in great anxiety to escape from the disgrace of the goods of strangers having been tampered with under his roof, offered, that if his son had been to blame in carrying off the girl for the purpose of marrying her, he would give one of his daughters in her place! Or, if he had been guilty of a greater impropriety, he would immediately pay the usual fine for him; viz., 600 piasters in value. The girl has since been got back (how I know not): she was no virgin before her purchase; and it has been determined to return her to her family, and make them repay the purchase money. This affair is of importance, chiefly as it has elicited the exhibition of a general interest that the community should not be disgraced in the eyes of strangers by any violation of their property.

Semez, Wednesday, 21st.—I returned to these my former quarters on Monday last, and Mr. L. came with me to remain here till the chiefs be ready to go with us to the projected congress with those of Abazak, all larger operations against the Russians being to be deferred till this combined effort can be matured. Our host, Kehri-kû Shamuz, is absent; and, I have no doubt, busy about state affairs; but his lady supplies all our wants abundantly; yet, like one's guardian angel, or a spring in the heart of a mountain, the source of our benefits is invisible. I have not, to my knowledge, seen the skirt of her garment. Such privacy is generally observed by the wives of chiefs, who, like Shamuz, have been much in Turkey, excepting as regards members of the same fraternity.

I need not describe particularly our journey here, as I have gone over nearly the same ground before. On this occasion, however, not being in much haste, and having light baggage, we made use of the local knowledge of Hatukwoi, chief of Ghelenjík, to approach the two forts on our route more nearly than I did previously, and to examine a pass which lies near the commencement of the line of march the Russians lately pursued; as it is probable they may attempt to return the same way, and we wished to see if means could be taken to make that somewhat difficult for them.

This pass lies at the head of the small valley of Mezip, immediately to the east of Ghelenjík; and through it the Sûtshûk seeks the sea. If the Russians had confined themselves to the pass, their advance might have been rendered very difficult*; but this we found they had foreseen, and consequently commenced operations by bringing an auxiliary force from Ghelenjík, and covering the neighbouring hills with clouds of tirailleurs, a mode of fighting the Circassians hereabouts, from want of use, are not yet sufficiently acquainted with; their ideas, like those of the Persians of old, being chiefly confined to charging on horseback on level ground. In this, perhaps, they are unrivalled. We have often lectured them upon the expediency of meeting the Russian warfare among the hills, by bush-fighting; of avoiding pitched battles on the plains (as the chief cause of slaughter

* The Circassians had prepared, immediately in front of the opening of the pass, a very strong breast-work.

among them), and of rendering the defiles still stronger by artificial defences. I doubt much, however, if any thing effectual in these respects will be done during the present campaign; and I hope in Heaven it is the last England will permit!

As Mr. L. had never seen Ghelenjík, and we were desirous of knowing the nature of its fortification, we begged the chiefs to find us quarters for the night in the neighbourhood. This, after some little difficulty (on account of *suitable* accommodation), they succeeded in effecting, at the hamlet of a very mild, friendly old man, on the north-eastern side of the hills of Ghelenjík. But his guest-house was not finished, nor his furniture all brought to these his new quarters, (newly moved to a hill with an enemy's fortress on the other side!) and we had to content ourselves with things as they were; viz., a log house, of which the interstices were not yet clayed up, and newly-shorn grass for mattresses. But our tables were numerous, and excellently furnished. We went over the ridge of hills to within three miles of the fort, and found it more regularly fortified (towards the land only) than I had been led to expect from what I seen from the bay. The ramparts are but earthen, yet their angles are sufficiently numerous to make an approach of the cannonless Circassians very difficult *in daylight*. Within range of the guns there was a large herd of cattle feeding, and some haycocks to be seen; upon both of which we perceived, from what passed while we were there, that the Circassians were forming designs. Some 200, I hear, have assembled for this purpose.

On Monday morning we again ascended the hills and rode along their summits (the rich pasture of which I had again to admire), for the purpose of seeing the fort called Doba (or Alexandrinsky), placed opposite the entrance of the Bay of Semez (Sûjûk Kaleh), but not so as to command it and prevent ships entering. It is small and earthen-walled; but sufficiently angled to make its capture also a perilous undertaking for the Circassians. They are not without cannons I ought to have observed, for we are told that they have taken about a dozen pieces; but they have not enough of powder to spare for them.

Yesterday we went with the other male indwellers of this hamlet to a funeral on the road towards Anapa; but all the portion of the ceremony we witnessed and partook in, was the consumption of a great quantity of victuals by some dozen parties, seated on the grass under the trees of a small hill. The largest party was composed of females, whose heads and shoulders (as among the Turks) were clothed in white veils; but they were placed at too respectful a distance from us for our seeing them, or their acts, particularly. During the feast, two or three men *rode* about to see that the guests were all properly served. Among *our* tables * was an excellent saddle of mutton, a portion always assigned by the Circassians to those whom they "delight to honour." The sheep seem generally of the flat-tailed species, which large excrescence of fat is exceedingly delicate. Guests are not invited to these funeral feasts, but the day

* The Circassian *table* is equivalent to our *dish*, each little table (or footed tray) being removed so soon as the provision on it is discussed.

having been notified, all the neighbours (and even passing strangers) go, on an understanding that, in return for their entertainment, they pray for the soul of the deceased. I trust they did not expect that of us. Horse-racing and mark-firing form generally a part of the ceremony or a result of the assemblage, especially at the funeral of a chief. Instead, however, of waiting for such recreation, we took a ride towards Anapa. We had not time to go further than to within ten miles of it, where from the top of a hill we had a fine view, and could form a tolerably good judgment of the localities ; but the fortress itself was hidden from us by a small intervening hill. I was somewhat disappointed to find that no very defensible country intervenes between the valley of Anapa and the valley of Semez. The hills on the east side of the latter extend, yet in decreasing altitude, to the vale of Anapa; and on the west the whole space towards the sea is covered with hills, some of them sufficiently high and well wooded to render them very difficult, but they also decrease in height till they terminate before Anapa. Between these two ranges of hills extends a cluster of lower elevation, and comparatively of easy access, forming but a feeble barrier; and I cannot but wonder, that during this ten years' war, and with the advantages possessed in science and means by the Russians, they should not have succeeded in possessing themselves of all the country comprised between the line from Anapa to Ghelenjík and the sea. It appears scarcely the work of one campaign, and that it has not yet been effected speaks volumes for the

determined resistance of the Circassians—the desire at all events, and repeated attempts, not having been wanting on the side of the Russians; but some may think, and perhaps justly, that this failure renders their abundance of means very questionable.

From the height we visited, Prince Pshemaff, who accompanied us, pointed out the sacred spot (as they justly esteem it) where Daûd Bey had held (just three years ago) his meeting with the chieftains of this neighbourhood, and first inspired them with the idea of combining themselves with the other inhabitants of the mountain-provinces as a nation, under one government and one standard.

Wednesday 28th. — The last ten days I have used partly in transcribing this long despatch*. Our host has been twice absent, having gone on business towards the Kûban. Mr. L. has also been busy writing to England; and this necessary labour (for labour in this warm weather it is to me, at least,) having been now nearly accomplished, we have determined, in the course of two or three days (if some other necessary affairs be by that time arranged) to press for the assemblage of all who have promised to accompany us to Abazak, and to set out for the purpose of holding the congress there. Some individuals (our host among the rest) seem opposed to our making this journey, while others are decidedly in favour of it; but unless the former adduce better reasons than they have yet given for their opinion, we shall set them aside.

But writing has not been our only occupation, as we

* Letters VI. and VII. were sent under a cover to England.

have frequently had visiters, with whom long conversations have always to be held. Among the first was the judge of Shapsuk, who brought word that the people of Jûbghe and Tshopsin had assembled near Pshat, and attacked a body of Russian foragers, whom they had forced to retreat (cannons and all) to the camp, without having accomplished their object. On Sunday last, we were informed that a Russian force had disembarked from two war-ships and a steamer at Toapse, for the purpose of burning two Turkish vessels. They reached the vessels, when a few Circassians, who were on the spot, attacked them with such fury, that they forced the soldiers to fly to their boats, without having fired the vessels, and even leaving behind them, in their haste, one of the cannons they had brought on shore. Many of the Circassians were killed by the cannon firing from the ships; but they soon assembled so imposing a force on the shore that the Russians set sail without making any further attempts. In this affair, it is said, the latter lost 200 men *(partly by the firing of their own ships)*.

Two men from Sûtsha have brought us more important intelligence, viz., that a large Russian squadron (of more than thirty vessels, it is said,) had appeared off Vardan and Khissa; that the wind becoming unfavourable for debarking there, they sailed towards Ardler, and landed a very considerable force; but while it was still in disorder on the beach, fifty-five Circassians (chiefly the nobles and proprietors of the estates of the immediate neighbourhood) rushed with their sabres amid the Moskovs (as they are always

called here), and committed such havoc that the ships in the offing commenced firing upon foes and friends indiscriminately, by which means forty of the Circassians were slain, and among them, I am sorry to learn, Beislam Bey, of Ardler, (a chief of whom I have generally heard spoken with much respect,) and his two brothers.

These men also state, that the Russian army from Sûkûm-kaleh has not been able to make their way beyond Gaghra; that the whole coast to the northward of that point had been strongly fortified in the manner I have formerly described; that about 10,000 Circassians, partly from the mountains inland, had assembled, and had agreed to remain on the coast, at the request of the inhabitants of that part of it, and on their promise to furnish them with provisions; that the Georgians and the Azras in the neighbourhood of Sûkûm-kaleh (who form a large portion of the army from that fortress) had sent word secretly to the Circassians, that they had been compelled against their will (and upon a representation that they would not be required to fight) to join the expedition, for the purpose, as had been said to them, of giving it an imposing appearance; and that if they were forced to advance against the Circassians, they would fire in the air!

Indar-okû has sent to inquire if he can have a place assigned him hereabouts for the establishment of his family, as he wishes to remove it from the neighbourhood of the Russians. This is certainly a wise measure, and I trust it will tend to restore this chief to the confidence of his countrymen.

We experienced great mortification at Adûwhaû, on our way hither, in learning that a neighbour of our host there lately had found, while ploughing, a vase, and within it some coins and a book in a copper case. On inquiring what had become of them, we found they had all been lost, excepting three pieces of the copper case, which I got in exchange for a razor (to show we wish to buy such things). They have some ancient Arabic characters on them, and the book was said not to be in Turkish. We have bought the few coins we have yet met with, and have spread, as widely as we could, the knowledge of our wish to have more.

It would appear that we might, if we chose, pass with many good people here for faithful Mussulmans. A lad was sent the other day to request us to write some verse of the Koran for his sister, who was ill, to have put in water for her to drink and get cured. I offered some medicine instead, but the lad refused it, as not being what he had been sent for. This error as to our faith may arise from their knowledge of friendship having long existed between the English and the Turks; for the general bonds of union in the East are religious, not political.

This day week we were left almost totally alone, as our host was absent, and the Prince Pshemaff, who lives here, and all the other males went, by our permission, to a marriage at some little distance. The rank of the parties was not deemed sufficient for our accepting an invitation to be present; but we sent a representative in my faithful Georgian, Luca, who bore a small present for the bride; which present,

however, he diverted from its destination, by bestowing it on a more beauteous damsel, who expressed attachment for him. Their amusements were songs, dancing (males and females), horse-racing, mark-firing, and cudgel-playing. He says he made his conquest through his address and valour in the latter sports, while I insist that it was owing to the silver cartouche chains, brass scabbarded sword, and English double-barrelled pistol which I lent him for the occasion; to which he replies, that the damsels here universally prefer valour to wealth, of which he has heard and seen numerous proofs, and that the songs they listened to with most delight were those about valour. Be that as it may, the father of the young damsel came here last Saturday, to take Luca (who, by the way, is somewhat handsome) to his house to see his daughter. They dined together, no one else being at the same table, and she again expressed her devotion to him, and her willingness to accompany him to Constantinople. He returned here quite in ecstacies at the conquest he had made, and at having discovered here so much greater freedom of manners than exists among the Turks, among whom most of his life for six years past has been spent.

A man in this neighbourhood has twice brought us a dish of white mulberries, which I was delighted to see, as another future source of wealth for this country in the breeding of silk-worms; for the white mulberry is thus shown to be a native of the country, and many of the hill-tracts on the coast could not be more profitably occupied than in its culture. I have been to see the tree, which is a very large one, and

have given directions about sowing the seed, by means of a wisp of straw, on which the ripe mulberries are rubbed. In this part of the country there are but few of these trees, and no silk-worms. At Pshat, Toapse, and elsewhere to the southward, however, silk has already been produced. To-day a large can of small wild strawberries was brought us, the flavour of which was exquisite.

Our numerous visiters and attendants make such a constant drain of provisions here, that we have ventured to order some sheep to be bought on our own account, and have been pleased at two of these visiters (a valiant khan and the judge of Adûghûm) having set an example in bringing with them a lamb each for the general entertainment.

Plague formerly, and war of late, have evidently depeopled and impoverished these provinces very considerably. By the former our host, Shamuz, lost in a short time forty-five of his dependants. That scourge is stayed, as I have previously shown, and it is well that it was so before the other attained its actual climax, which seems to threaten famine here, if continued for another season.

The temperature at noon has frequently of late been 80° of Fahr. (in the shade, with a northern exposure). It ranges from 10 to 12 degrees lower during the night.

Our host's two young sons returned to-day from the north. The eldest had been with 150 other individuals on a foray into the Russian territory, where they captured twenty-eight horses and two oxen, and returned without any of the party having been

wounded, as they found the forts, from whose environs these animals were taken, almost destitute of soldiers. This discovery has begot the idea of operations on a large scale against the forts themselves.

Shamuz's son (or rather nephew, adopted as a son on the death of his brother), who was killed in the last campaign, in his fifteenth year, had twelve wounds, received in different engagements!

Mehemet Effendi said jokingly a few days ago, that if ever they yielded to Russia, they (the Circassians) would offer her 40,000 cavalry to ravage Turkey, in revenge for the treatment they have experienced from her,—Selim, Prince of Janat (a major in the Turkish cavalry) has just indulged in a similar jest. Feelings more deeply rooted than jests generally are, sometimes seek vent in them. This Bey told Mr. L. he may marry his sister if he pleases, as he has no prejudices. Judging by the brother's features, she should be beautiful.

Thursday the 29th.—Since writing the above, we have been informed that a congress has already been held in the northern part of Abazak, and that the parties assembled there have taken an oath upon the Koran to stand by, and co-operate with, the people of these provinces in the war against the Russians. For what reason our presence at this congress was prevented, we have yet to discover. Perhaps it was the fear of our friends here to lose possession of us—the insignia of their authority.

The foray I expected upon the cattle of the garrison of Ghelenjík has been successfully executed. Twenty-six head were brought off, and many others

killed. There has been more fighting in the south; but particulars have not yet arrived. The three brothers-in-law of our host have just fallen in one engagement! The communication of this intelligence to our hostess (a woman of very strong feelings) produced a clamour of grief which was most distressing.

A reinforcement of troops has arrived at Yekaterinodar; probably to make up garrisons for the forts, I have spoken of above, as left defenceless. Yet this arrival of troops, added to the circumstances of another fort having been lately established on the Kûban towards Anapa, and to the expectation of the army at Pshat being about to set out on some other undertaking, whenever it has constructed a fort there, makes the chiefs hereabouts much at a loss from what quarter to expect the next attack. And this probably is the cause of the delay, (which has annoyed us,) in their execution of some measures recommended by us, about the expediency of which they appeared convinced. Among these measures is that of keeping a small army constantly in the field, to harass the Russian foragers, and to watch the favourable moments of attack, if the Russians should move from their present position before the projected "gathering" of the Circassians can be effected. The difficulty of mustering and transporting a sufficient quantity of provisions is the chief obstacle to the assemblage and permanent embodying of a large force.

The Circassians generally profess as much determination as ever to resist, and to perish along with their families, sooner than be forced to make a dis-

honourable peace with Russia; yet the efforts for their subjugation she continues to make evidently perplex them. We have expressed to them our belief, that it is the fear of England's interference that has driven Russia to her present desperate expedients; and the more we review these, the stronger becomes our conviction that this supposition is well founded. I trust her fears are equally so. What but such fear could have induced Russia to precipitate, so injudiciously, her requisition of recruits from the Kûban Circassians to the eastward, the Kabardans and the Noghaïs; and to have incurred the danger she is now placed in from their having been refused? What but such fear could have induced her to compose the half of her invading army in the south of Georgians, who so lately attempted to throw off her yoke, and of the Azras, upon whose necks it is not yet fitted?

But I must bring this long rambling letter to a close, and I think I cannot better compensate for any tedium you may find in it, than by transcribing the translation I made yesterday from the recitation of a Circassian song, which seemed to me to have some highly poetical ideas in it. Mr. L—— also made a translation, which you may perhaps see hereafter, and you can then exercise your critical powers in their comparison. After the recitation, in the translation of which the Prince of Janat, who is brother of the deceased hero, assisted, it was sung over to give us an idea of the music it is set to. The air is exceedingly plaintive, and the prince, while joining in the accompaniment, leant down his head

and shed tears. It should be explained that the hero of the song was called "the last of his race," because Selim had been then so long absent (in Turkey) without being heard of, that it was doubted if he were alive.

The Eulogy of Prince Pshûgûï.

"Before the years of his puberty had arrived his courage was matured. He died, not in defence of his native village, but to display his bravery. He heard the music of the red-haired Muscovite chieftain, and wielding his sabre to its sounds, he rushed into the midst of the enemy. He was the last of his race, and its heritage has passed into the hands of others. His sister's hair was dark and glossy like the black silk of Leipzig; but, in her grief she has torn it from her head, because the chief of her house had fallen. He rushed against the steed of the red-haired chief; the general escaped, but Pshûgûï bore off his charger, of the valued race of Tram, and its housings. In the morning he left his home about an affair of peace, and in the evening he was carried back in his grave-clothes. 'God be thanked,' cried his mother, 'that thou hast fallen in the field of honour, and not in the pursuit of plunder.' Twice in the battle he changed his steeds, but his heart was unchanged, and thus Pshûgûï fell. When the women of the village for whose safety he had fought, saw him stretched lifeless before them, they tore their raiment and cried, 'We have lost the prince, our deliverer!' His sabre had saved them from captivity. The soul of Pshûgûï is fled, but his body and arms

have been saved from the hands of the enemy. When he uncovered his deadly rifle, the rapid shots filled the Muscovites with fear, as numerously they fell beneath them. The sun shone full on his crimson garments; and, like the sun, he became conspicuous in the midst of the field. His black horse swept through the fight, swift as a hawk, while blood from the sabre of Pshûgûï dyed his sleeve. With his last breath he said, 'Take my faithful steed to my beloved, the daughter of my host; in seeing it she will think she again sees her Pshûgûï.' His friends shed tears of water, but his sister tears of blood. Youth has fallen a martyr in the midst of war!"

LETTER VIII.

RESIDENCE AT SEMEZ CONTINUED.—GLIMPSE INTO THE STRUCTURE OF CIRCASSIAN SOCIETY.

SEMEZ, NEAR SÛJÛK-KALEH, 1*st July*, 1837.

MY DEAR ——. Hadji Ismael, the Judge of Adughûm, staid here a couple of days, and a good deal of interesting conversation passed with him; for his mind, though not profound, is active and inquiring. *According to his account**, it is only about sixty years since anything like general religious observances and social order were introduced in this country. Previous to that time, intestine feuds and wars raged generally and incessantly; and the only semblance of religion consisted in some unmeaning ceremonies performed before the crosses. In speaking of their present religious system, he adverted to the four books of authority upon which it was founded; viz. 1st, the Bible, being so far as I could understand a portion of the Old Testament; 2nd, the Psalms of David; 3rd, the Evangelists; and 4th, the Koran. But he contended that the communication of Mohammed, as having been received immediately from God himself, is entitled to more respect than that of Christ, which came through the medium of the archangel Michael; and, finding himself

* It will be seen hereafter, that an equally respectable witness speaks of the past times with as much of regret as this one does of condemnation. I have but to give their evidence impartially.

unopposed in this position (as proselytism is not our mission), and that the Koran was even commended for the precepts of morality that are diffused through it—and Mohammed for having introduced better religion than the miserable corruption of Christianity which previously prevailed around him; he got emboldened to make the experiment (as it seemed to me) of taking up another; viz. that the knowledge communicated in the Koran is sufficient, and no other books necessary. This, however, being less dangerous ground for attack, in a passing conversation we assailed him on it, made him abandon it, and eventually even express a desire for more knowledge, upon which Mr. L———, by way of clenching this nail of conviction, presented him with a Turkish History of Turkey.

Hadji Ismael gave us further instances of the equality aimed at by the lower orders here (in accordance with the principles of the Koran), and said, that they had raised their fines to the level of those of the nobles; viz. two hundred head of oxen for homicide, twenty-four for seduction, and so forth. I grieve, however, to learn that these Circassian warriors have not yet attained to a just knowledge of the value of the gentler sex; as the fine for slaying one of them, which, defenceless as they are, should certainly be greater than that for slaying a man, has been fixed at only one half! But on this exciting occasion, calling to our aid recollections of all the worth of our unrivalled countrywoman, whether as wife, mother, or daughter, we attacked the Circassians (for several were present) vigorously in all their heretical posi-

tions ; and, if we were not victorious in convincing them of their error, in underrating the value of the female mind and functions, I trust we at least deserved to be so.

I have learned some other regulations of the fraternities; viz. that upon the death of any member, his wife being the property of the fraternity, as having been purchased by one of its members, is given in marriage without payment, to another member, upon the condition of his supporting her children if she have any ; but if she be too old to be married again, the society is bound to support her. If she get permission to marry into another fraternity, she must part with her children, who must remain in their father's.

Hadji Ismael hearing we had some matters to discuss with the chiefs in his neighbourhood, offered to write anything we wished, or to communicate it to those who assemble, pretty numerously he says every Friday, to say prayers at his mosk. We prefer holding another congress, so soon as it can be constituted.

The young man I saw wounded at Pshat is since dead. Shamuz has just emancipated one of the few serfs he has remaining and all his family. Such acts of benevolence are often performed according to the expression used here " for the soul." This is the man I was so pleased with on the journey from the south. Shamuz emancipated his deceased father also, for a long course of faithful services. Slavery, according to our acceptation of the word, does not exist here; and is not at all the term that should be

used in speaking of the condition of the lowest grade of Circassians. When an individual of this class is transferred from one occupier of land to another, an amount of cattle or goods, at present equivalent to from £15 to £20, is paid for the right of his services; but such transference cannot take place without the servant's consent, and he receives lodging, maintenance, clothing, and some gratuity yearly for his services. When he wishes to marry, his master must pay the purchase-money of his beloved; and with regard to their children, the boys continue servants of the master; and when the girls are married, the money paid for them is divided between the master and the father. If the master strike or otherwise ill-use his servant, he has the right to insist upon being sold to another. He may also buy his freedom, the present price of which is about thirty oxen. Fines for his misdemeanours must be paid by his master; and in this way our host paid, lately, two hundred oxen for homicide committed by one of his serfs, and he has at present to pay sixty oxen on account of the same man, who has fled to Russia with another man's wife.

These servants cultivate the ground, take care of the horses and cattle, and serve in the guest-house; but the more menial duties—the hewing of wood and drawing water—are generally assigned to Russian captives. The Circassian serf cannot be *compelled* by his master to go to war; and upon journeys, it is considered more *comme il faut* to take a free man as an attendant.

I have already mentioned the low price of Russians:

when an exchange of prisoners takes place, he who has a relative to redeem buys a Russian slave to give for him. The tenure of land seems to be here on a remarkably primitive footing, no one among these simple people appearing to have conceived the notion of calling a greater extent of land his own than what he can usefully occupy; in fact no more than what he has enclosed for immediate culture. Grazings are common to neighbours, and are seldom enclosed, and any one finding ground unoccupied may seat himself upon and enclose it forthwith. The soil in fact is considered national property, and occupancy the only transient title of an individual to any portion of it. No payment of any kind has to be made to any superior. The only case in which I have heard of payment being made is where a wealthy man has given a poorer one the means of cultivating the ground, when the produce is equally divided between them.

Public opinion and established usage appear to be supreme in this country; and upon the whole, I cannot but admire the order that prevails under them. Outrages, and some of considerable flagrancy, occur, but they result chiefly from quarrels or their consequences, and are comparatively rare; while the morality, harmony, tranquillity, and good-breeding, that characterise the people in their general intercourse, are such as very few countries with written codes of law and all the complex machinery in general deemed necessary for the distribution of justice, can boast of. If the standard of good man-

ners be not a high one here, it is at least such as all endeavour to act up to, and the great majority attain; and the extremes of sumptuousness and refinement, or beggary and debasement, are equally unknown.

Barley, oats, and rye, which were sown in the autumn, have been ready for the sickle for ten days past, especially the barley; and their harvest has at length commenced. Wheat—of which I have seen only one field—Turkey corn, and millet, were not sown till spring, and I think it will be at least a month before the two latter be ripe.

Whatever jurisdiction or authority the very ancient family of Basti-kû Pshemaff, the prince of this district, may have possessed formerly, I can see no semblance of anything of the kind having descended to him, beyond the chief place at table or on divans. At councils he and others of rank, unless they be old men, always give way to such as are elders and have abilities for public debate.

Wednesday, 5th.—On Sunday afternoon we rode over to the plain of Anapa, for the purpose of seeing it, and of meeting some chiefs there on the following day upon state affairs. Our quarters were with Sûbash, a wealthy proprietor (of the thfokotl, or middle rank), and formerly atalik of Tûgûz. He is a lively, handsome old man, seventy-two years of age, who, when girt with his arms and in the saddle, has no appearance of being beyond fifty or fifty-five. All his sons have perished in the wars, and last year he had his corn destroyed and cattle driven off by his

neighbours the Russians, yet he remains in the same situation—viz. just within the verge of a little thicket in the valley, with some marshy ground in front to retard intruders.

On Monday, after a dinner of about ten tables, finding that some misunderstanding had taken place with regard to the meeting, we determined to spend the day in a visit to the Russians, whose demesnes Sûbash knows well, and undertook to pilot us through. A ride of about two hours brought us to a stream, on whose banks we dismounted for prayers. Another hour brought us among rising ground, trees, and thickets, where we were desired to go slowly while some of our seven attendants rode forward to beat the bushes for Russians, who often lie in wait thereabouts to fire upon those who adventure further. This process being gone through without any game being started, we reached the top of the rising ground and obtained a view of the whole of the Russian acquisitions and establishments in this the locality of their earliest conquest in Circassia. At about a mile from the termination of some low hills to our left lay Anapa, which, from where we stood (some five miles distant), seemed but a dark short ridge on the margin of the sea, in a creek of which on the north lay one small vessel at anchor. Towards our right, at about three miles and a half from Anapa, on the plateau of a small eminence, we were shown some rows of houses and windmills, enclosed within an earthen rampart. This the Circassians called the new agricultural colony; and two miles in advance of it, and still more towards the right, was

to be seen on the brow of an eminence, a small circular earthen-walled redoubt.

While surveying these interesting objects, I was surprised, as I had formerly been at Pshat, to see that one of our party (again on a white horse, and thus more conspicuous) had advanced within half cannon-range of the redoubt, and was still leisurely approaching it. Upon observing this, six of our party, including Mr. L——, advanced one after another towards the fort, leaving four of us on the eminence, two Circassians, myself and servant. I felt chagrined at unprofitable danger being thus again incurred, and at the little time that remained (for the afternoon was already far advanced) for examining Anapa more closely, the prime object of our excursion being thus, as I thought, injudiciously neglected.

Leaving therefore one of my Circassian attendants on the eminence, to tell the rest of the party whither I was gone, I desired the other to pilot me through the copse-wood in the valley on our left, to the hills that overlook Anapa. I found the copse-wood to be entirely composed of oak saplings, whose branches were so densely interwoven, that our horses were occasionally enveloped in them, and had some difficulty in forcing their way. The moral effects of this obstruction were not lessened, as may be supposed, by the idea that occasionally visited me of having the scene described in the Lady of the Lake here realised, by there starting up from among the thickets, a host of "belted warriors armed for strife." But while entertaining this fancy, my fears were

suddenly transferred from my own party to that of Mr. L——, by three reports of cannon, whose smoke curled upwards over the wooded eminence behind us, which, to the heightening of our anxiety for our friends, prevented us seeing if any execution had been done among them. My first impulse was to turn and satisfy myself on this point; but on looking back, I found we had already made our way through a considerable portion of the valley, so that "returning were as tedious as go o'er," and, by the time we had returned, there was no saying but that our friends might have been driven back through the valley to the north, by the garrison of the fort, and that we three might, by our return, have fallen into the hands of the enemy. I determined therefore to go forward to the hills, in the hope that those I was most anxious about, Mr. L—— the youngest son of Shamuz (a charming boy), and our old host Sûbash, had not suffered by the shot, and would take the warning given them to avoid more.

Amid these conflicting feelings, the *désagrémens* of which Luca increased by exclaiming every now and then, "Que dirons-nous à Kehri-kû si son petit fils est tué?" (this son however his father sends to the wars like the rest), we at length, after much toil, reached the side of the hill, which afforded a better view of Anapa, and the recent colonial establishments and redoubt in advance of it. But the interest of the scene was gone, we therefore turned our elevation to account in finding the most practicable way back; and, in silent anxiety about our friends, descended the hill and recrossed the valley by a detour.

While so doing I perceived a person on a white horse riding towards the redoubt among the trees, near which we had separated, but at too great a distance for the possibility of my distinguishing if he were friend or foe. When we reached the base of the wooded hillock, where the Russian scouts are said to lurk, not a human being was to be seen around. It wanted little more than two hours of sunset; we had a five hours' ride still to perform before reaching Semez, where our night's quarters had been fixed; the excursion to the Anapa hills had taken much more time than I expected; it appeared highly probable that our friends during our separation had left the ground, either by our former road, or some other; and, lastly, it seemed rash for us three to attempt crossing the patrol-ground of the Russians, after their attention had been excited, and ignorant as we were of what had occurred during our long absence. These reasons determined me to return homewards, but I left the Circassian, who resided in the neighbourhood, to tell our friends what had become of us, and Luca and I set out to find our way as we best could back to the hamlet of Sûbash. This, after some deviations, we reached, and our anxiety was increased by learning there that none of the party had returned. Still there remained a hope that they had taken a more direct road to Semez, and that Sûbash also had gone there. His absence made it impossible for us to remain at his house for the night; therefore after devoting in vain half-an-hour of the three quarters of sunlight that remained to an anxious

gaze over the valley for anything like the approach of our friends, we were reluctantly compelled to depart without them, having first got a man on foot to accompany us, less from fear of not finding the way than for preventing our being stopped as suspected persons. The greater portion of our ride homewards was performed in darkness and silence, saving when Luca exclaimed from time to time that the man had lost the way, or that if we did not find our friends at Semez something serious must have happened to them. With this latter conclusion I felt forced to coincide; but as to the way it troubled me little while I could see that it lay as it ought to do, between the hills that bound this valley.

We reached this hamlet about ten at night, and were dismayed to learn that none of the rest had been heard of. I desired Luca to say nothing of the cannon-firing, lest our hostess should unnecessarily be rendered anxious about her son. I had not yet decided with myself what had best be done, when turning to see who had entered our room, I recognised young Noghaï, quietly hanging up his rifle, and, in a few minutes, he was followed by all the rest, old Sûbash included. The painful anxiety and silence of the last six hours were now succeeded by the opposite extreme of noise and merriment, and the same tale of adventure was being told at one and the same time in three different languages.

The circumstances were these. The party reconnoitred the fort so closely, that the Russians fired first one cannon, and subsequently two others, to drive them away; but they proceeded on towards

Anapa, until they came abreast of the fortified colony, between which and where they were was the ridge at the termination of which the small circular fort is constructed. Upon the summit of this ridge two horsemen appeared. The first cannon-ball passed close by Mr. L——, who was then immediately opposite the horsemen, and separated from the rest of his friends. He took these two men to be Pshemaff and another, and galloped towards them. Luckily a small morass intervened, which his horse hesitated to cross, and gave him time to perceive his error. The Russians then galloped back to the colony, and presently a body of about 300 soldiers sallied rapidly out, to repel the seven reconnoitrers, whom no doubt they thought the *avant-garde* of a larger body. The garrison of the redoubt had been cutting grass, but a good way within range of its guns. Osman, one of our party, captured a good military great-coat belonging to one of them. Having thus gratified their curiosity, made booty, and given the enemy a false alarm, our friends took the shortest road to Semez. Late at night Shamuz returned home, and expressed his great surprise that no casualty had happened to us, as the Russians, he said, were almost invariably placed in ambush as far as the stream where we had halted for prayers, and many Circassians had been wounded lately in proceeding beyond it. I must endeavour in future to find a less venturous pilot than old Sûbash.

The country towards Anapa affords evidence of exuberant fertility, and former cultivation. In some places, the deep rich grass had such a quantity of

corn growing wild among it, that, at a little distance, it had the appearance of corn-fields still under cultivation. In one large tract I—or rather my horse—had some difficulty in making way through herbs with a yellow flower (of which I have specimens) from nine to ten feet high: the horse ate them greedily. The great extent of ground cleared of all trees proved what I was told, that the population of that valley had formerly been very considerable; while the wide oak copses, in other localities, proved also that nature was resuming possession of this disputed territory.

The news of to-day are, that a large body of Circassians has crossed the Kûban at Adughûm, and that much cannon and musket-firing has been since heard.

Yesterday, in compliance with a ten days' invitation, we went to attend the marriage, or rather betrothment-festivities of the son of a neighbouring wealthy merchant. Their hamlet is in the centre of the valley; but I presume that a feast in the open air there would be apt to attract many more guests than provision could well be made for; and this I took to be the reason of the merriment in question, having been held in a little glen near our residence. We went over, ladies and all (but not together), between nine and ten o'clock, by which time a very large company was already assembled, and a wide densely-packed circle of males and females was busily engaged in dancing. But, in this amusement, I am sorry to say, the Circassians, so far as I have yet seen, have not displayed any elegance of invention. The circle was composed of men and girls alternately;

each man placed his arms under those of the girls who adjoined him, and interlaced his fingers with theirs. The master of ceremonies—with a long flat baton in his hand to keep order withal—the musicians and other individuals, some of whom sung a sort of bass accompaniment to the instrumental music; were placed in the midst of the circle. The instruments were the three-fingered pipe, and two-stringed violin I have formerly described. As for the dancing, it consisted merely of a swinging of the body backward and forward (the entire circle moving round slowly at the same time), as if it were preparatory to an occasional springing gently upwards on the toes. Sometimes only a portion of the circle moved thus upwards, communicating the motion to the rest in vermicular undulations; sometimes the whole did so simultaneously; and ever and anon, as some slenderer damsel became oppressed with the squeezing, heat and dust, and retired to the adjoining group of females, others were brought forward by their mothers to supply the vacancies; and, in the selection of these vacancies, no doubt a good deal of maternal prudence and *foresight* was exerted, as I thought I saw. This figure was danced during all the time we remained, and would be continued till sunset, having as strong a hold, it would seem, on the fancies of the Circassian young folks, as the "first quadrille" had, or has on those of England. But even with this peaceful pastime, something warlike must be mingled, to stimulate the Circassian fancy; thus pistols every few minutes were fired over the circle of dancers, and it was incessantly threatened with a breach being made in

it, by an onset of horsemen (some of the chiefs took part in this, but none in the dancing), who were repelled by a body of youths on foot, screaming and striking the horses with branches of trees to frighten them. But nothing of all this appeared to have the least effect upon the nerves of the ladies, either young or old; and even a much more alarming, though, I fear, not a very unusual incident I am about to mention, produced none of those vociferous and unequivocal evidences of fear which slight causes frequently elicit from the females of the West.

While gazing from an eminence upon the dancers, Mr. L—— and I saw, amid a little throng of lookers-on, a long white pole suddenly elevated and brought down with such good or rather bad will on the head of one of the party, that it felled him to the ground instantaneously. The dance was broken up by the men in it rushing out to surround the aggressor, when a loud and violent altercation ensued. Meantime the females retired, and we descended to see the sufferer, a tall young man, who was led under a tree with his head bleeding copiously. But the blow had fortunately taken place on the side of his head, where the sheep's wool of their caps forms a good protection; otherwise the skull must have been fractured, unless those of Circassia be much harder than ours. The young man did not utter a word of complaint; amid the conflicting statements given us by others, the only explanation we could then get was, that he was a relative of Tshûrûk-okû Tûghûz, and had been present when one of his serfs shot a relative of the present aggressor, who appeared the more to

blame, as the master of the festival had, at its commencement, made proclamation (according to custom) requiring that all present should defer their feuds, if they had any. We accordingly expressed strongly our disgust at the conduct of the assailant, and our determination to quit the ground unless he were sent away. He had the discretion not to wait for this. By and by the females were brought back from some adjoining houses they had retired to, and the festivities proceeded without further interruption unless the serving of a plentiful dinner can be called such. To us the scene it afforded was none of the least interesting, as there were present between three and four hundred people, divided, according to their grades and fancies, into some dozen separate groups, to serve whom three or four men mounted and as many on foot, flying about with tables, trenchers, &c., in their hands, were kept busily employed. The ladies dined by themselves in the houses; and their frequent slow and stately procession to and from these houses, formed to my eye by far the most graceful part of their performances. Horse-racing and mark-firing were other portions of the entertainment. We retired soon after the repast, having first sent a present to the betrothed lady. Another entertainment will be given when the marriage takes place.

Upon subsequent inquiry as to the cause of the assault we had witnessed, it turned out that the young man who had suffered by it (who has since been here and appears none the worse for the blow) was present, and assisting along with thirty or forty

other members of two fraternities, in putting to death a man who had been found an incorrigible thief; and that his relative thought it incumbent on him to avenge the death, because the trial and sentencing of the culprit had not been conducted with the usual formalities, the heads or presidents of the societies not having been present. The prescribed forms are that each man should be tried (as I shall hereafter show) by the elders of the two fraternities concerned, and be punished by his own society; that smaller fines should be inflicted for the first and second theft, and one of 200 oxen or death for the third; and if death be inflicted by others than one's own fraternity, 200 oxen fall to be paid by those concerned in it to the fraternity and family of the person executed. The young man was generally blamed for having presented himself at the festival, while the feud necessarily arising out of the irregular proceedings of his fraternity was uncompounded; because he might have expected that some of the opposite party would be present also.

Much cannon-firing has been heard to the southward.

A wealthy Armenian merchant, who is here today, is atalik to one of Mensûr's sons, which is so far a proof that the Mussulmans in this quarter are not illiberal. I have however heard this circumstance objected against Mensûr, but the objection seemed based on party feeling.

We have just bought a gold coin which was shown us at the entertainment yesterday. A description of it and of some other coins which

we picked up in Notwhatsh, is reserved for the Appendix.

Some beautiful goat-skin leather made here has just been shown us.

There can be no greater proof of the penury to which the people of this province have been reduced by the war than this, that we have been applied to to contribute some aid to the wife and family of Sefir Bey. Her mind was beginning to suffer through the anxiety occasioned by his long absence; but it is said to have recovered in some degree through the hopes occasioned by our presence. She and her husband suffer from the same malady, princely *munificence* or *profusion*. It is said our gift (no great things) will make her looked upon as much honoured.

I have still a pretty good stock of tea, which enables us to regale our visiters with a beverage they appear very fond of; but my stock of sugar being nearly out, we sent to buy some honey, and it was brought to-day in a goat skin, the commonest vessel for all things. My tea has made the Circassians here produce theirs; viz. an herb which grows wild in this valley, and elsewhere abundantly, and the use of which, as a substitute for either tea or tobacco (!) was first pointed out to them, ten years since, by a Hadji from Bokhara. It makes a tolerable infusion, which we shall drink and be glad of when my Chinese tea is done. I have preserved specimens of the plant.

Thursday, 6th.—They have at length begun the barley harvest, which I have been urging them to do for more than a week past; but much will now be lost from over-dryness, besides the sacrifice of time.

Their sickles are like ours; but those I have seen are sadly worn. The thermometer at noon to-day, and for some hours after, stood in the shade at eighty-two degrees, and at ten P.M. it was at sixty-eight degrees.

Here, besides myriads of the common fly, is another of the same size and form (lighter in colour), but with a different disposition, as it alights on one's skin without the bustle of the other, and so gently, that the sting of its *sharp* proboscis, where it first alights, is the first sensation that gives notice of its presence.

Prince Pshemaff seems to me much to be pitied at present. His family is at Constantinople; he has not head enough for state affairs; there is no war as yet, save occasional attacks upon the foragers of the army at Pshat; and his station does not admit of his taking part in the forays into the Russian territory, or against the cattle of the garrisons of the forts here. Inspecting our property and occupations, afforded him some amusement for a time; but this, I fear, is getting stale, and every now and then he has recourse to the fiddle (which he cannot play well) for relief under the burden of his existence. If peace come suddenly upon this country, the chief "occupation" of this prince, and of many others of inferior rank and similar character, will be gone; and unless a lively trade succeed, and induce them to betake themselves to agriculture on a larger scale, they must die the lingering death of ennui; for you must remember, there are here no towns or villages where idle people may congregate to help one another to

kill their greatest enemy—time. Happy the country whose sons have daily a good portion of active duties to perform!

Saturday, 8*th*.—In one of the skirmishes at Pshat, a grandson and two serfs of Indar-okû have been wounded. The former, a mere lad, was surrounded, but escaped with two wounds. Russian deserters come over almost daily, and they report that the English and French fleets are expected: much to the satisfaction of the Russian soldiery, who are disgusted with this long war, and wish it ended any how.

Here was to-day a blind lad, who played on the Circassian pipe, and who seemed ("furore dulci plenus") furiously inspired by the god or demon of music; for he rolled his sightless balls, tossed occasionally and wildly an arm to correct the time-keeper and singers accompanying him, and the veins and muscles of his neck and face were so distended and exerted, that it was painful to look at him. He appeared completely master of his instrument.

Monday, 10*th*.—An Armenian who has been in Anapa lately, says, that it has been resolved to establish 15,000 colonists in the neighbourhood of that fortress. The Emperor is to furnish them with cattle and implements to begin with; to make good their losses by Circassian forays, and share half their profits. 2000 men, it is said, form the garrison of Anapa and its dependencies at present. Recruits have been again demanded of the people of Psadûg, who have again sent to the Abazaks to say, that they intend resisting the demand, and wish to know if the

Abazaks will support them in their resistance, and receive them if they be forced to fly. To this, the Abazaks have assented, and bound themselves by an oath.

To-day we had a visit from a Russian soldier established in this neighbourhood, and finding him clear and cool-headed, we had some conversation with him. His own story is, that after having been taken prisoner, he became attached to this country, and determined to establish himself in it. For this purpose he obtained permission to return into Russia. There, for what reason I know not, he was thrown into prison, and kept fourteen months in confinement; had 200 stripes of the knout, and was again made a soldier and sent to Anapa. Here he put his plan in execution. He induced (by his representation of the life they would lead here) twenty-five men to desert with him. He, his wife (for he had got one for the exploit), and five of the men, descended the walls by means of a rope, during the night, but the rest were discovered and arrested. Upon asking him his reasons for coming over to the Circassians, he replied, "to what purpose is the war carried on against this country? for last year only the half of our army returned, the rest having been cut off, by the Circassians; by want of provisions and camp equipage, or by disease." He added the well-known dismal picture of the life of a Russian soldier, and said his former comrades were universally disgusted with this long war. It would appear as if the aim of the Russian government were to make the life of its soldier of no value to him, in order that he may be reckless of it in

battle. In proof of the total inefficiency of the Russian cavalry against the Circassians, he related an instance he witnessed, of fifty-two of the former, with two pieces of cannon, having been attacked so suddenly and furiously by eight of the latter, that they fled into the small fort near Anapa, without firing a single cannon-shot! But the Russian infantry he represented as nearly in the same degree superior to the Circassians, on account of the want of discipline among them.

The thermometer at four this morning stood at 55°; at mid-day, and for the two following hours, it generally reaches 15 to 20 degrees higher. I have never yet observed a still sultry day, as there is always a breeze of wind from one quarter or another. Of late, southerly winds have been prevalent.

Our servant Osman, the Turkish merchant, said of us to a friend the other day, "I have got hold of their sleeve, and will not quit it till they cut my hand off." There is no fear of our doing so, as he is a hale merry old fellow, and serves us with heart and hand readily.

Among the numerous deserters who daily arrive from the Russian forts or camp, it is still generally reported that Russia expects war with England and France. Several also ("magna cum parvis") have mentioned my name; and one in particular, who came from Anapa, endeavoured to stipulate on surrendering himself that he should be taken to speak with the Englishmen. A good reward, it is said, will be given to any one who will deliver us into the hands of the Russians. But it is also put in our

power to save them that expense; for the governor of Anapa has sent word that he would be happy to receive us in the fortress. He amused himself also at my expense, in expressing wonder that my brother had not sent me some ship-loads of arms and ammunition, for the use of my friends the Circassians.

This communication came through the medium of messengers, who had been sent to that officer (not with our knowledge) with a copy of Williamineff's answer to the message of the Circassians, and of their reply thereto. He expressed disapproval of Williamineff's letter, and promised to the envoys to report the correspondence to his government. He added a wonderful story about the Sultan having abdicated in favour of his son, and having gone to Odessa to meet the Emperor and demand restitution of the Crimea, threatening implacable war in case of refusal. This tale of the Sultan's abdication has come here by another channel also. Such are the paltry tricks which the Russians devise for the purpose—it appears to me—of amusing the Circassians, and thus gaining time to build forts and raise more troops for their destruction!

By occasionally concentrating their forces for the severe punishment of one tribe; by threatening some, and cajoling others with promises of peace, amity, and other advantages, the Russians have certainly succeeded to a considerable extent in substantiating the principle "divide et impera." By this means, they obtained permission to punish the Karatshaï (near the head of the Kûban), and have bound the

chiefs of Psadûg, and the provinces eastward of it, by treaties of mutual forbearance, while they are laying waste the territories of their immediate neighbours in Shapsuk and Notwhatsh. The obligation of such a treaty has been pleaded by these chiefs, hitherto, as the cause of their not aiding the people of the two latter provinces; and they urge in addition the openness and indefensibility of their part of the country as a reason why they should not expose themselves to the fury of the Russians, uncertain as they feel of support from the Abazaks.

Such are the materials which we are endeavouring, and shall—when we know, by news from England, whether our footing be firm or not—more strenuously endeavour to combine into a general national movement.

Psadûg extends from the Sheps (opposite whose junction with the Kûban is the fortress of Yekaterinodar) to the Pshish; and, to a like distance from the Kûban to the frontier of Abazak, forming a square. The principal chief of the district is Prince Atshaïgag-okû Pshûgûï; who, it is said, can bring from 5 to 6000 men into the field, and who has not permitted the Russians to have any forts or troops within his territories. Between the Pshish and the Buyuk (great) Laba (opposite whose mouth is the fortress of Ustlabinskaïa) are the provinces of Hatukwoi, Temigui, Makhosh, &c., which entered into the same league of mutual forbearance as Psadûg. Eastward of the Laba is a great plain, destitute of firewood, and therefore uninhabited, save by deer, foxes, fitches,

&c. It is from these provinces, and Besni (which lies to the south-east of them), that troops have of late been demanded by the Russians, but the chiefs (who have much more power than those of Notwhatsh and Shapsuk) have hitherto steadfastly refused compliance, and they take, moreover, every opportunity of encouraging the latter in their resistance, and of communicating to them such intelligence of the intentions and movements of the Russians as they can obtain.

Tuesday, 11*th*.—There has been held here to-day the trial of a case of theft. The assemblage consisted of the judge of the district, (with a great book of Turkish law, copiously indexed,) our venerable host, and some dozen other seniors, as assessors. The number of the latter varies according to the importance of the case, but six from each of the fraternities concerned is the minimum. The delinquency in question was the theft of an axe; but being the second offence committed by the culprit, the punishment was necessarily more severe. A fine of twenty-four oxen was therefore first agreed on; but upon a representation having been made as to the poverty of the thief, the fine, after much debate, was reduced to fifteen oxen.

To these trials witnesses are cited, who are first examined as to their faith, and (if Mussulmans) are made to take an oath on the Koran to speak truth. But their testimony, nevertheless, has weight only in proportion to their known credibility; and the testimony of a person of bad character is considered inadmissible. The culprit also is examined, and is per-

mitted to speak for himself, and to cross-question the witnesses. The proceedings, as may be supposed, (from the characters of the witnesses being occasionally matter of debate,) are often very tedious, and occupy several successive days, sometimes weeks; and during this time, if the case be of such importance that people are brought from a distance to it, the plaintiff and defendant must respectively maintain their assessors and witnesses. The successful party has also to make a payment to the judge, varying from two to four per cent. These are all the charges which either of the parties can be put to. It is incumbent on the fraternities to inforce the execution of the sentences of the tribunal, and each fraternity must aid the families of its members (according to certain fixed proportions) in paying the fines imposed for homicide (of whatever sort), and other criminal or fortuitous delinquencies. Time (often to a considerable extent) is allowed to the culprit or his family for the payment of his proportion of the fine awarded against him; but in cases such as homicide, death, or some other severe penalty, is inflicted in the event of over-protracted payment.

Every individual (including serfs) is comprised in some fraternity or other; for at his birth he is held to belong to that of which his father is a member.

Serfs are frequently manumitted, and they can then enter a fraternity, upon taking an oath to abide by its regulations, and pay their portion of its fines. Each fraternity is presided over by its elders, without any election. The hoary beard, with respectability of character, forms the only title to respect and pre-

eminence both in council and elsewhere. In other respects there is entire equality among the members of every fraternity; and, however numerous they may be, their families cannot intermarry—such marriage being considered incestuous.

The fines, as I have said before, are mitigated if the culprit be poor; except in cases of injury to the person—in these the fixed fine must always be paid. The fraternities are of all numbers—from fifteen or twenty, to two or three thousand. Smaller fraternities are frequently combined together in one large one. But although a fraternity always pays (proportionally) the fines for homicides committed by its members, it is usual, after the commission of two or three homicides by the same individual, to punish him by death, or selling him to slavery. These punishments are also inflicted in other cases of incurable delinquency; the sentence of death being executed by throwing the condemned person into the sea, or a river, with his arms tied. Traitorous correspondence with the Russians is a crime *par excellence*, and is punished by the enslavement or death of the culprit, the seizure of his family and effects, and the sale of the members of the family into slavery —the proceeds of the sale being divided among those who detect the crime, or aid in its punishment. The fines for civil crimes are levied from the members of the fraternity of the party offending, and are divided among the members of the fraternity of the party aggrieved; the person aggrieved, or the immediate relatives of one killed, receive (as the delinquent also pays) only a small proportion more than the other

members of the fraternity. A person condemned to death by his own fraternity may, if he can, fly to the member of another, and make a konak of him; and the konak, with his society, becomes bound to protect or pay for him. The common people have of late raised their fine for homicide to the level of that of the nobles—200 oxen. The fine for the homicide of a prince was here, till of late, and is still, to the eastward, about ten times higher; while that of a khan or sultan appears to remain undefined in amount.

These fraternities are said to be of great antiquity; and it appears strange that so singular a feature in Circassian society should not have been mentioned, so far as I have observed, by any writer upon this country. They are essentially the government of Circassia; and any improvement in it must be ingrafted upon them, deeply rooted as they are in the habits and affections of the people.

A stranger obtaining any native for a konak has claim upon him for the rights of protection and hospitality (as inviolable among the Circassians as among the Arabs); but the whole of his host's fraternity are held equally responsible for his safety and well-being; and they consider themselves bound to avenge any insult or injury done him. If he become much esteemed by a family, he is made to take the mother's breast in his mouth, and then he is considered as one of her sons.

Our host Kehri-kû, or rather Shamuz (for the surname is seldom used), had not only his house (built *à la Turque*), but a large proportion of his grain also,

burned by the Russians last year; he has therefore permitted us to buy some grain, &c., for the use of the guest-house. We bought some sheep also; but this he has prohibited; and as his own have been sent to some hilly country at a distance for security, he has to borrow from his neighbours when none are presented to us by visiters. In this way we met him this evening, a good way up the valley, with a lamb for our supper on the horse before him—a person whose influence in these two provinces is not exceeded by that of any other!

On our return he said he saw I was to *blame* for the long walks Mr. L—— and I take, as he found me generally first. Here as well as elsewhere, I have found it difficult to make the Circassians appreciate the benefits of exercise, which they never themselves take, unless for some ultimate object. Our daily promenades seem to them but the wearing of shoes or fatiguing of horses. The irregularity of their meal-times seems to us another heresy in their domestic economy. We have two principal meals, and *sometimes* two subsidiary ones. Of the two former we have had the morning one at all hours, from nine to four, and the evening one at all hours, from seven to eleven. And this is not a peculiarity of this household.

I believe the people here are surprised at our extravagance in using butcher's meat every day; for the great majority of the inhabitants, rich as well as poor, are content with vegetable diet and milk, unless when they have visiters. We were tried with this for two or three days, when we had no visiters and our

host was absent; but our British stomachs rebelling, we bought some sheep, and that hint of our habit has been sufficient ever since.

Prince Pshemaff, the other inmate of this hamlet, generally favours us with his company at our butcher-meat meals (the other meals he is less careful to partake of), and we have thus abundant opportunities of learning both the history of his family and the opinion of one of his grade upon the revolutions and the present condition of Circassian society. His family is generally admitted to be of very remote antiquity, and its founder to have been the first settler, not only in this portion of the country, but a large portion of the coast to the southward, over which they exercised uncontrolled supremacy. The prince's nominal supremacy still extends as far as Tshopsin,—that is, about seventy miles. He is the nominal superior of Indar-okû, who is not a Pshe, or prince: but he retains only the personal respect still conceded to his rank; and of all the power of his ancestry, not a shadow remains. His opinions, it may easily be imagined, are unfavourable to the changes that are taking place; yet he takes an ample part in the hostile operations against the Russians.

LETTER IX.

RESIDENCE AT SEMEZ CONTINUED—DIPLOMACY—HAY-MAKING AND HARVEST—GEOLOGY—BORDER WAR.

SEMEZ, *Wednesday, 19th July,* 1837.

MY DEAR ——. On Saturday last we went by invitation to pay a visit to Tshûrûk-okû Tûghûz. We were to have set out the day before, but delayed doing so in consequence of a pressing invitation to attend the funeral feast of a neighbour, where persons were expected with whom it was thought desirable that we should converse about the measures we wish adopted. Having shared in the feast and in a long debate that ensued, we set out about two in the afternoon, accompanied by Prince Basti-kû Ali-bí, a sage elderly noble of this neighbourhood, and some eight or nine others.

Our road lay right across the hills which form the east side of this valley; we found their eastern declivity very steep, and thickly clad with forest-trees. Emerging from these, we reached a winding upland valley, through which runs the small lively stream Haberdah, along whose banks were fields of exceedingly rich vegetation, interspersed with clumps of trees of large growth. There were frequent indications of partial inclosure at a former period, but there was little grain, and few habitations were to be seen. The hills on each side were clothed with fine forest, and their projections, where the rock was laid

bare by the stream, showed the presence of lime, one large mass of which resembled chalk. The Haberdah runs into the Nebejeh, which joins the Adûghûm on its east bank, and forms with it the boundary between Shapsuk and Notwhatsh. Immediately on entering the valley of the Nebejeh, we descried numerous hamlets, not a gun-shot from each other, interspersed with rich corn and hay-fields (well inclosed, and with gates on the cross-roads), which continued till the valley terminates in a large and very oblong plain called Tejaghuz, almost the whole of which is devoted to pasture, while the low hills that enclose it, and which continue diminishing in elevation as they approach the plain of the Kûban, are covered with hamlets, corn-fields, and woods. It was now the middle of hay harvest, and many parties were actively at work. The grain harvest too had begun in some places.

On one of these hills, toward the northern part of the plain, we espied the hamlet to which our valiant host (*in prospectu*) had moved last year after the burning of his own in the vale of Semez.

The sun set before we reached the extremity of the plain, where Hatukwoi (a relative of our host) came out to receive us, when the usual lively scene of firing and horse-exercise took place. The firing was repeated on our entering the hamlet of Tûghûz, where a large assemblage of persons was in waiting; and supper having been served "*al fresco*," under a rustic canopy formed of branches of trees and grass, we retired for the night to one of the very humble cottages occupied by the family for the present.

The greater portion of next morning was spent under our canopy in political conferences with the persons of note assembled; and then there was displayed (against us) on the grass an array of thirty-six dinner-tables, which, in such hot sun-shine as prevailed at the time, looked more like an attack upon our comfort than a contribution to it. Exhausted by the heat, talking, and eating, I had retired a short time to the comparative quiet and shade of our cottage, when I was called forth to resume my place in the tent; and presently I saw advancing from the houses of our host's family, across a little brook, a party of people with his lively white charger in the midst. An excellent coat of chain mail was laid by one of the party at my feet; a vista in the crowd showed Mr. L—— the charger which was intended for him, and to my servant was given a sabre, the scabbard of which was embroidered with silver lace. These presentations were accompanied by a short speech from Tûghûz expressive of his want of means wherefrom to give things more suited to our deserts, and of his hope that we would be contented with such as he could give. We replied in suitable terms to such generosity, and added, that having accepted his presents as a proof of his attachment and respect, we must beg of him to allow us to return the horse, adding that we should consider the coat of mail as presented to us jointly. This seemed to us the more necessary, that this brave chief is kept constantly in want by his extreme munificence; for although he frequently receives large presents from his wealthy relatives in the interior, he gives them

away (as he did with a present we gave him) almost as soon as he gets them. Thus it comes that he who a short time ago had thirty horses and four coats of mail, has now scarcely a horse but the white charger, and no other coat of mail than the one I have spoken of. But he is about to set out on another visit to his relatives, and it is to be hoped he will return a richer and a wiser man.

We were taken after this ceremony into a neighbouring wood to see an oak celebrated for its size and antiquity. It took eight men's arms, full stretched, to gird it, at the height of their arms above the ground; and it is from sixty to seventy feet high, yet is it still "green and flourishing." The Prince of Janat, who was present, said that his ancestors had had possessions in the neighbourhood "since the time of the *Genovese*," and the tradition among them was that the oak had always been the same. "Crescit occulto," &c. thought I.

On returning from this walk, I observed a large field of barley quite ripe, which three little boys were cutting, while a dozen of young men, near at hand, were amusing themselves at catching each other (perhaps exercise in prisoner-taking), leap-frog, rope-skipping, &c. Harvest work would, I presume, from this and similar instances, be esteemed degrading to warriors.

We were now to be the guests of judge and priest Hadji Ismael, and were accordingly shown into a small hurdle-fenced paddock with a neat clay cottage in the midst. This cottage we found to be the mosque; we were given our choice whether we would occupy

a room in the judge's hamlet hard by, or a rural structure which had been prepared for us in the corner of the paddock. The cool and picturesque appearance of the latter (besides attention to the feelings of the architect) made us at once vote for it. Its back and roof were composed of leafy branches securely intertwined, some long plants being mingled in the roofing to make it more dew-proof, while the flooring was one soft and fragrant bed of newly mown grass and aromatic herbs, (which abound everywhere,) with mats, mattresses, and cushions laid over it. While reclining on these and surveying (from the rising ground on the slope of which the mosk is situated) the pleasing landscape which the plain, the hills, and the mountains before us afforded, the sun went down, and forthwith we were agreeably surprised to hear, issuing in musical tones from the tree above us, the usual call of the Muezzin to prayers from the gallery of the minaret. On inspection, I found that a ladder had been constructed against the tree; and that some basket-work fixed amid its branches formed a gallery.

After a substantial supper we stretched ourselves, with some five or six warriors beside us, beneath the leafy canopy; and I (being somewhat sleepless of late) had sundry opportunities, during that beautiful moonlight night, of impressing the interesting scene upon my memory.

Next day we had a visit (among others) of Hadji Guz Beg, a stalwart warrior of about sixty years whom I described at Pshat, and whose daring exploits have made such an impression upon the Russians that the

women of their frontier make use of his name to scare their children into quietness. The Russian generals have repeatedly offered him anything he chose to ask, if he would enter their service, or even speak with them, and the emperor is said to have offered a large sum for his portrait. But Guz Beg treats all their offers with the scorn they deserve, and is indefatigable in planning and executing measures of hostility against them. He had just returned from an excursion with two hundred and fifty companions across the Kûban; but they found it still so deep from the melting of the mountain snows, that they were obliged to leave their powder and fire-arms on this side of the river, for fear of spoiling them in swimming across. Their sabres were thus their only weapons, and with these they scoured the precincts of the Russian fortresses, and drove in the soldiers engaged in the hay harvest; who fled with such precipitation, that they left behind them their scythes, about two hundred of which the Circassians brought off in triumph. The Hadji is a very strongly-built, hale, old man. His features have a ruggedness of expression when quiescent, which they seldom are, fun being their predominant characteristic. He dined with us, and showed his playfulness of disposition in purloining the cream from our side of one dish, handing the major part or the whole of the contents of another to the bystanders, before we were well begun upon it, &c. But on one or two occasions I fancied I could see in his eye (a small, keen, restless, grey one) the latent fire of impatience. Not long ago one of his sons accompanied him to battle; and on the youth shrinking from the

Russian fire, Guz Beg reproached him for such behaviour in one of *his* sons; and drawing his sabre (a large and beautiful Damascus blade) he made him advance first. The son fell; but these circumstances, it was said, did not make the father view his death otherwise than is usual here—predestined. He has allowed me to make a sketch of him, having first made me promise that all his arms should be put in the picture: and that the likeness is correct I think I may safely say; because, unaccustomed as the people here are to such productions, Shamuz, when shown the sketch, exclaimed with a laugh of surprise, "That's Guz Beg!" and others have recognised it with equal readiness. I have taken two other likenesses, which have been similarly recognised; and I intend, as opportunities offer, to form a "Gallery of Circassian Notables."

We have two hosts here—the Mollah and his Muezzin, an Anapali Turk, and quite a character, a perfect Caleb Quotem; being equally zealous in the duties of the mosk, officiating at death-beds, cooking, attending at table, directing and joining in the sports of the village, acting as a cannoneer-in-chief with the single cannon they have, &c. &c. &c. His mouth plays the most "fantastic tricks" when set a-talking, and his speaking is all superlative both in diction and action—in keeping with his supererogatory jumping. Upwards of thirty dishes, chiefly *à-la-Turque*, attested his skill in cookery. I have a sketch of him for a corner of my "Gallery."

From Tejaghuz we went to the valley of Anapa,

(where a large meeting was to take place for the trial of a case of manslaughter,) it having been thought expedient that we should see some of the notables expected there. Our route lay first through the rich open valleys I described in my ride to Adughûm, then through one more narrow but equally rich terminating in moderately high unwooded hills, the descent of which brought us to the hospitable hamlet of old Sûbash in the valley of Anapa.

On our way I was again vexed to see so little done to reap the immense quantity of ripe corn we passed. In one field I saw a single old woman at work; and, in another, three old men. Not so however with the hay harvest; for, in passing the lesser valley, we saw a large assemblage of males and females on a hill side; and our escort, knowing its nature, immediately called a halt and sent an embassy to the hill side. We seated ourselves meantime beside a stream; and presently a large body of men with scythes over their shoulders descended and marched past us; then a bevy of damsels tripped shyly by, with flowing robes and gay silver head and breast ornaments; and lastly came some men bearing bozè and cakes, the objects of the halt. The mowers proceeded to an adjoining field, whence we heard the whole of them begin singing, at the full pitch of their lungs, one of their lively national airs; and in passing we found them keeping time with the sweep of their scythes; while the young ladies were grouped under a tree in the middle of a field, their presence no doubt inciting the mowers to greater activity. As we rode past many of our party fired their pistols and rifles in honour

of the occasion—the commencement of the hay harvest in this quarter.

On entering the hamlet of that lively septuagenarian Sûbash, we found him on his green giving battle with a great branch of a tree to the first four of our party; and he seemed to have fully the best of it. But the best 'Dame Quickly' in England cannot serve her guests with more assiduous and kind attention than this old gentleman exerts gratuitously; and he had this advantage over her, that the pressing invitation he gave us to prolong our visit ("as, thank God, I have plenty to entertain you with") could not but be supposed totally disinterested.

After having seen the notables, we returned hither by the defile which lies between this valley and that of Anapa, and found it tortuous, thickly wooded, and such as a hostile army could not easily pass through. We spent a night in it, at the picturesque hamlet of a very wealthy landholder and merchant, called Keral ("the king").

Saturday, 22nd.—I mentioned before that the three brothers-in-law of Shamuz had fallen in one action in the south: their sister had just been told of it for the first time, and the vociferations of her grief are so violent that they can be heard here—200 yards from her house. It is said that she had a week's presentiment of bad news; but feared only for her daughter, married to the brother of the Pasha of Trebizond. Are such presentiments purely accidental?

The slaughter of nobles in the present conflict of the southern coast is said to be immense—the fighting

is incessant, and the people not satisfied with having made their princes swear on the Koran that they will not make peace with the Russians, have taken some of their children as hostages for their fidelity.

The sea of conjecture we have so long been drifting in, has been strongly agitated these two last days by gusts of conflicting and monstrous intelligence. A Turkish vessel from Constantinople has arrived at Khissa, and it is said that her crew have reported that English, French, and Egyptian squadrons have entered the Black Sea, and proceeded towards Odessa. It is also said that the Russian army at Pshat is destitute of provisions and ammunition, and that Williamineff has been taken to Ghelenjík, dangerously ill or dead. Next we heard that twenty men-of-war and two steamers—all bearing red flags—had appeared on the coast near Pshat. ("Hurrah," cried my ardent countryman, "it is the English fleet!") and our horses were ordered for break of day next morning. After this we had a corrected account of the allied fleet; viz., that it had rendezvoused at Sinopé, which was said to be full of Turkish soldiers, ready for embarkation—that others were marching from Sivas, and that the Sultan had said to the English Elchi Bey (Lord Ponsonby) that the ships might wait for them, as there were two Englishmen in Circassia keeping alive the spirit of the natives. Lastly, it has been said that Ibrahim Pasha is marching towards Georgia to attack the Russians! The fleet at Sinopé has eventually dwindled into two or three ships supposed to be men-of-war having been seen there; and the naval demonstration at Pshat has shrunk into a

three-decker with seven red flags, said to have been seen there, and to have fired forty guns as a salute. The military news from the latter place may turn out a Russian ruse. The above specimens of "latest news" may serve to show that there is here no need for newspapers to keep awake the interest of the public by playing with its hopes and fears.

Shamuz gave us this evening a ludicrous account of an attack on Sûkûm Kaleh, in which he once shared; and of the predicament he and his countrymen found themselves in when they had gotten within range of the guns of the fortress, rolling great circular paniers filled with sticks and earth before them; and discovered, to their dismay, that these moveable ramparts afforded no protection against the cannon-balls! Eventually, however, they stormed the ramparts, and captured the fortress. The conversation having subsequently chanced to turn upon the practice of kidnapping, and the admiration address in that exploit attracted, we thought it necessary to show the light in which almost all the rest of the world viewed such exploits; when Shamuz explained that he spoke of "bygone things, with which they should no more be reproached, than Turkey should for disorders in her administrators which have been remedied." But he admitted that captives are still occasionally carried off from among those provincials who have submitted to Russia.

The thermometer, yesterday at mid-day, stood at 78°; to-day at 79°; and at midnight at 64°.

Sunday, 23rd.—Our stores, like our knowledge, are supposed to be equally various and inexhaustible.

A beautiful daughter of the Prince of Janat is very ill with inflammation of the face; and to-day he has sent a messenger to request advice; and, among other things, fifty drachms of sugar, besides pens and sundry colours for writing a charm for her cure. Luckily I had it in my power to comply with all his wishes; and to send him, in addition, medicine, and some tea.

Thermometer to-day 80°; wind as usual easterly.

Monday, 24th.—Besides our Georgian, Greek, Turkish, and two Circassian hired, and many casual, attendants, there are three, in particular, of our host's establishment whose service appears to be devoted to the guest-house at present; and I have never in any country experienced (male) service more unexceptionable in all its prime qualities—honesty, cleanliness, regularity, respect, and attention. In most of the other larger establishments we have visited, I have observed the upper servants to be generally such as one would hire almost at first sight.

This day has been as yet the hottest we have experienced. At noon, in the shade, with a northern exposure, the thermometer stood at 87½°, and in the sun at 115°. I did not, however, find it oppressive, for there was, as there generally is, every day, a fine breeze from the east, which is succeeded, as is also usual, by a breeze from the west, that sets in almost immediately after sunset. The thermometer now (midnight) is 69°.

Tuesday, 25th.—I had just been discussing with Mr. L. the expediency of inducing the chiefs to establish a telegraphic communication between this

place and Pshat, for the purpose of giving notice—by means of a fire or fires on the hills—when the Russians left that place, and of the route they took; when we were informed that a method of communication had been agreed upon by means of musket-firing. The Russians have been now about seven weeks at Pshat: it puzzles us a good deal to discover what their purpose in remaining there so long can be; for the sod-walled fort they have thrown up is, in point of size, inconsiderable, and they have not erected any barracks or other buildings. Mr. L.'s idea is, that the expectation of the arrival of the English fleet has forced them to alter their plans—mine, that they wait for the corn and hay being stacked, that they may destroy them more easily; while our friends the Circassians do not appear to bother themselves with speculations, happy, as they are, at being left unmolested to get in a very abundant harvest. I have been pleased to learn that many of them have adopted the plan of sending their corn to places of concealment in the hills.

After many strenuous efforts to persuade the chiefs to get a permanent force sent into the field, we found ourselves compelled to give way to their view of the matter, viz., that it should not be attempted till after the harvest has been secured, as the destruction of provisions—by a great drought three years ago, and the subsequent burnings by the Russians—has been so great that the people cannot listen at present to a call for contributions. This inaction has been to us exceedingly irksome, and is rendered more so by the

dearth of credible intelligence as to what is going on in Europe; but it appears unavoidable.

Thermometer at noon 84°.

Wednesday, 26th.—Wind N.W. Ther., noon, 80°.

Saturday, 29th.—During the time we were at Adughûm, and its neighbourhood, I observed the Armenian and Greek merchants, concerning the seizure of whose goods I have formerly spoken, hanging on about the councils held there; and I supposed that they were only urging their plea for redress for the detention of their property, which redress I had promised to endeavour to procure them, whenever some more important affairs were arranged. But having recommended that their affairs should for the present be left in the state in which they were, and that arrangement having appeared to be acquiesced in, it did not occur to me that anything would be done with regard to the portion of the goods still remaining in Anapa. I supposed that they would the more readily leave these where they were, after having experienced the seizure of the rest. It appears, however, that they had calculated differently (probably feeling greater security from the presence of us Englishmen), and had been busy urging for permission to bring the rest of the goods out of the fortress. This permission, after much debate among the members of seven or eight societies, was at length granted them; and either then, or at a subsequent meeting, some Circassians of good character were appointed to accompany them, and see that no improper communication with the Russians took place. All this we learned only on Wednesday last; and next day

word came that a body of Circassians had assembled in the vicinity of Anapa, for the purpose of seizing these goods, because they thought permission to bring them out should not have been granted. This news annoyed us exceedingly, as proving the want of unity of opinion, or, what we still more feared, the absence of sufficient respect for the decisions of their chiefs and elders, whose supremacy it appears to us so desirable to establish, and, if possible, increase. We determined therefore that one of us should go immediately to the judge of this district, Mehmet Effendi, (who had authorized and perhaps participated in the former seizure,) to intimate our disgust at the intelligence we had received, and the necessity we should find ourselves under of quitting this part of the country if it proved true, and the chiefs were unable to enforce redress; convinced, as we should then be, of no security for strangers existing here. We judged it most expedient that both of us should not go upon this business, lest the excursion might be misunderstood, and amusement be thought its object. Mr. L. undertook it, and next morning one of the servants who accompanied him returned to request that I would join him immediately. I set out, not knowing whether war, politics, or pleasure, were to be my occupation. A ride of two or three hours, in the direction of the sea-coast and Anapa, brought me to a picturesque lake (called Abrar) of about two miles long and one broad, and surrounded by pretty high wooded hills, in a hamlet, on the side of one of which I found Mr. L., the guest of Ali-bí, who received me very kindly, and had been the cause of my being sent

for, as he wished to have a visit from us, which he said he would have solicited sooner had he been ready to receive us. He apologised for the indifference of his guest-house, which was but a make-shift for the time, as the Russians had last year burned his whole establishment, corn, &c. Nevertheless, he told us if we chose to remain with him till the spring, he would be happy of our company, and could afford to kill a sheep for us every day. He is a tall, boney, mild-looking, but rather plain, elderly gentleman, with a grizzled beard, which he said was black when this Russian war began, wishing it to be understood, no doubt, that it had prematurely lost its native hue; and in fact whether it be age or care that has plundered his small stock of beauty, he is, confessedly, one who takes a deep interest in the welfare of his country; and, as Sefir Bey's *locum tenens*, has stood most faithfully at his advanced and dangerous post, remaining almost always in his own neighbourhood, to encourage the people to maintain the contest, and treating with contempt all the brilliant offers the Russians have made to seduce him, which was the cause of their having sent an expedition for the express purpose of burning his hamlet. As to the merchants' affair, it turned out that none of their goods had been plundered, but some individuals had taken the Armenian's horse from him, immediately on his coming out of the fortress.

Among the individuals said to be implicated in the transaction is our lively old friend Sûbash. This report was—on his account and owing to our fondness of him—extremely vexatious to us, and as we were desirous of immediately learning how

far it was true, we sent our Turk to tell him that if he had been concerned in the affair, he must clear himself of it or renounce our friendship. Osman was further desired to proceed to the hamlets of Hadji Ismael, Mensûr, and the chiefs of Shapsuk, and to tell them how strong were our feelings in regard to this affair, and how desirous we were that they should exert themselves to prevent the disgrace and injury likely to result from it. He was desired to tell them, in addition, that the time having now nearly arrived at which it had been said that the securing of the harvest would enable the chiefs to enter with more spirit and chance of success upon the measures we had proposed to them, we begged they would fix a day for holding a large congress on these measures, and detain Osman until they could send word by him of the day they agreed upon. Ali-bí expressed himself very strongly in regard to the threatened seizure of the goods, saying that if such an infraction of the decision of a council were permitted, it would induce him to quit the country. In order to prevent it he had, on Mr. L—'s arrival, sent off toward Anapa a young Turk (his most confidential dependant) with precise and peremptory instructions on the subject. The impolicy of the decision of the council—at a time when the mass of the people is suffering such privations from want of trade—is shown by this result; yet I am in hopes to find that the contravention of it has been got up by a few isolated and powerless individuals; and that the good sense of the majority will support the execution of the decision of the chiefs and elders.

It is to be remarked, in favour of these provinces, that although the hereditary chiefs have in a great measure lost the power their ancestors possessed, and that the people are thus so far without prescriptive superiors, being swayed only by those who have acquired influence on public opinion, that influence has not, in any one instance that we have observed, been accorded to an individual who did not deserve it on account of his superior experience, wisdom, energy, and general integrity of character. All these leading men also are advanced in years; wealth seems really to lack here its usual consideration. It ought also to be remarked, that although there is here no prompt executive, and although the punishments inflicted are the slow results of the decisions of trial meetings (such as I have described) called for the purpose of judging an accumulation of offences (small as well as great), there is no instance, so far as I can learn, of anything like brigandage existing, notwithstanding the destitution to which many have been reduced by this long war. Theft is of frequent occurrence, but when discovered it is, as I have shown, severely punished; and it is only in a remote neighbourhood, and when adroitly executed, that it has, or rather *had*, the same tolerance among the Circassians, that it had, less than a century ago, among our own Highlanders. Armenian and Turkish merchants —attended only by their own few attendants— traverse the country in all directions with large stocks of goods, and never experience either theft or violence.

On the northern side of the way to lake Abrar,

the mountains are barren, and their surface whitened by calcareous stones and ridges; while those towards the south have a deep rich soil, and are clad to their summits with luxuriant trees and herbage; and these more fertile mountains seemed to extend all along the coast. Through the glen of the lake run —almost due north and south—strata of the same stone (not thick) with intervening beds of schist; and some of these strata (as on the Semez hills) are nearly vertical.

I shall here venture, though with great diffidence, a little *résumé* of my geological observations *en route*. In this neighbourhood are rocks of the super-medial (with some evidences of the superior) order, having strata of shell and coarse limestone, sandstone, beds of marl and lime in a state of decomposition, calcareous schist, and argillaceous and bituminous shale. To the north are some salt springs near Adughûm and Vastoghaï. To the southward I have found a hard chalk; but as yet I have not seen either flints or gravel in that direction. Flints are found, I am told, near Adughûm. A lime-stone of a light drab-colour, containing here and there veins of calcareous spar, is, I believe, the predominating stone throughout the mountain range between the vale of Anapa and that of Pshat. Behind Ghelenjík, and to the south of Pshat, are beds of ironstone, accompanied by limestone, sandstone, argillaceous shale and calcareous schist. To the N. E. of Pshat is a mountain in which are very spacious caverns or excavations, called by the Circassians "the mountain of lead;" but no mining operations

have been carried on there within the period of the oldest traditions of the country. I hope to visit it soon, as well as some hot sulphureous springs, three days' journey from Semez, towards the east.

On the coast, a little to the south of Jûbghe, two series of strata form an obtuse angle, the one dipping towards the north-west and the other to the south-east. The latter have in general an inclination of thirty to forty degrees; but every variety of angle and contortion is to be seen, as at Aguadshe, where a thin upright stratum of sandstone presented at a distance the appearance of giant hurdlework. A little to the northward of that place, at Mesghahu, is a bed of rich ironstone deposited in a basin of sandstone. About Sûbesh appears to begin the medial order of rocks, what I saw there of the mountains being composed of clay slate in a high state of disintegration, and there being, a little to the northward of that, at Sûkûkh, unequivocal evidences of coal. At Mamaï I found the beach encumbered with great blocks of limestone and reddish sandstone *. I am told that, about forty-five miles to the southward of Mamaï, porphyry and the primitive or inferior rocks of the central range present themselves, abutting on the sea at Ghagra, and are capped with snow almost throughout the year.

To-day it is again cool and agreeable, as the wind is northerly, and the thermometer at noon 73°.

* It was told me subsequently that the Russians of the fort of Sûtsha (about two miles southward from Mamaï) had discovered coal there, which they used for fuel.

This afternoon arrived old Sûbash, with the promptitude of innocence and friendship. We received him at first a little coolly, supposing him concerned in the attack on the Armenian, but he proved an *alibi*, having been at a marriage at the time. Our reconciliation was therefore most cordial, and was sealed by a friendly embrace. He said he had felt much shocked at the imputation. "To what purpose," said he, "should I, an old man, wealthy enough and without family, make myself enemies by participating in so disgraceful a transaction?" He had come immediately to clear his character, although he had thereby missed his opportunity to take part in an expedition of one hundred men, who intended to attack the Russians while cutting the grass around their establishments near Anapa.

Shamuz has entertained us again this evening with some of his war-stories, but they fall from him incidentally and unobtrusively, like all the rest of his lively and interesting conversation. Taken 'all for all,' I have not yet seen his match in this country. His aspect blends, most harmoniously, venerableness and integrity, with mildness, intelligence, and vivacity, and such appears to be his character. I have, moreover, frequently observed the strength of his mind, in the equanimity he preserved at the reception of both good and bad news, which excited and depressed those around him; and his bravery and generosity are equally admirable. But I am forgetting his story. He says that, some years ago, he and a few others crossed the Kûban on an expedition

against the Russians, when they were attacked by superior numbers; and one of their party, a very brave chief, fell shot through the neck. The wound appeared mortal, and as it was impossible for them in their haste to transport his body across the Kûban, they left it concealed among the long grass and reeds on the banks of the river, bringing away his arms and his horse for his family. His family had deplored his death; the females had performed the Circassian wake (which clamorous ceremony resembles the Irish one), and a great assemblage of his friends were receiving *compensation beforehand for their prayers for his soul* in an abundant feast, when they were scared from it by the apparition of the lamented chief himself, in ghastly guise, his clothes torn and bloody, and his throat rudely bandaged. After convincing them he was not his ghost, he narrated to them that, on recovering his senses, he found himself alone among the reeds, and all his arms gone except his knife, with which he cut up his clothes and stanched with them the bleeding in his neck; he then swam the river, and with great difficulty regained his hamlet!

The thermometer now (at midnight) stands at 58°.

Monday, 31*st*.—Yesterday we were invited to go down to the valley, to be present at the commencement of the hay harvest of our host and the prince, who farm the grounds of the latter in partnership, Shamuz having been obliged to remove his farm stock and utensils from his estate near Anapa. We

found some sixty to seventy men assembled, and busily employed mowing and singing a lively song, which they intermitted on our arrival, and set up sundry wild cries to frighten our horses and give us an opportunity of showing our management of them. A party of them then rushed upon poor Luca, and pulling him from off his horse, carried him off in triumph as a prisoner to be ransomed. We bargained to exchange a sheep for him (according to the usage in such cases), and a fine fat one was soon produced, to contribute, with a quantity of honey we had previously given for bozè, to the feast of the day. This feast is all the compensation given for the day's work, and is the means adopted to procure assistance by all who have more hay-harvest work than their own servants can perform. The scythes were little more than half the length of ours, and most of them had been ground to the *back-bone*. A great deal of work was done; but, to my eye, in a very unworkmanlike manner; for, instead of beginning at one side of the very large breadth, and cutting down regularly and steadily to the other, the mowers roamed in parties over the ground, and attacked, according to their fancies, the thickest masses of grass, as if they had been so many Russian 'corps d'armée,' and prostrated them with great despatch, amid shouts and songs, but leaving all the corners untouched. There were only two or three who mowed with something like an ample English sweep, the rest seemed rather to be killing weeds than cutting pasture. Most of the grass here is exceedingly rank and coarse; and, in many places, it has been

entirely supplanted by other herbs, particularly a long stalky one (about eight to ten feet high, with a light blue flower, a species of chicory), of which the horses are very fond. Both blue and white wild clover are occasionally to be seen. The grass is left on the field as it is cut, and next day I saw part of it in haycocks.

In the evening Mr. L.'s Greek arrived from Pshat, and reported that the Russians had set out for Tshopsin six days ago, when some fighting took place, and sundry were killed and wounded on both sides. The Circassian telegraph must therefore have been asleep, or its intelligence withheld from us, lest we should again become impatient. On learning this news we told Shamuz, that we cannot consent to remain longer in inactivity; and that, unless Osman bring us word of a day being fixed for a congress, we shall proceed to the vicinity of the one Russian army or the other, to see what can be done with the people of these neighbourhoods. Our host replied in terms that showed he was ashamed of the inactivity of his countrymen hereabouts, and said, that he should be ready to accompany us, his own affairs being about finished.

This evening there are reports from the south also, that the Russians have been obliged to send back the Georgians and Azras, because they fired in the air; and that they have not got a fort erected, as they were attacked incessantly by the Circassians.

Wednesday, 2nd August.—Osman returned to-day from his errand to the chiefs of Shapsuk, but the

result is not satisfactory. Most of the chiefs were at a distance from home, engaged in the trial of a delinquency, of the grade of 200 oxen; and those he saw, instead of having fixed a day for a congress, said, that in a week or so they hoped to get something agreed upon in that respect. As little good seemed likely to result from such a message, we came to the determination that the time had now arrived when it was necessary for us to make an extraordinary effort to rouse the people of these provinces from the lethargy into which the gloomy state of their national affairs, and their dependence upon foreign aid, seem to have plunged them. We therefore addressed a letter to the chiefs of the two provinces, stating that, up to this time, we had always entertained a hope that we might succeed in inducing them to put in execution the advice given them three years since by their best friend, Daûd Bey, to unite their forces and give them effect by placing them under the management of an established government of some form or other; but that as the harvest-time, for which we had been desired to wait, had arrived, and seemed to have produced no change in their disposition, we had now become convinced that it was against their inclination to take any step towards the accomplishment of these measures, and that they preferred trusting the cause of their country to the course of events; that it therefore had become our duty to lose no more time in inactivity, but to proceed to other parts, in accomplishment of the objects that had brought us to the country.

Luca has gone with this letter, and his instructions are, to communicate it to the chief judges of Notwhatsh and Shapsuk, and to request them to intimate its contents to the chiefs. He is directed also to request Tûghûz and some others to accompany us on our departure, which is fixed for this day week.

LETTER X.

RUSSIAN PLOT—ANOTHER CONGRESS—THE KUBAN —RETURN TO SEMÈZ—ANOTHER CONGRESS—AN ENVOY AT A LOSS.

SEMEZ, *Tuesday, 8th August,* 1837.

MY DEAR ——. On Thursday last we saw, in the course of our daily ride down to the bay, a small three-masted Russian vessel riding above the middle of it, thus obliging us to proceed more expeditiously than usual to our bathing-place, for fear of being fired upon. In the evening we learnt, with surprise, that she had sent a boat to the shore, and intimated, by means of an interpreter, to some Circassians on the beach that the crew had nothing but black bread for five months past, and that if they could have some sheep, eggs and butter, they would gladly pay well for them. The Circassians replied that they could not give them the provisions till they had got the permission of the two Englishmen, but that if they would come ashore next day they had no doubt they could obtain for them what they wanted. Meantime we were told the Circassians were making arrangements for capturing the boat and her crew, and had made use of our names merely to gain time.

We feared that blood might be spilt to no purpose, and in an affair not creditable to our friends, and were therefore prepared to go down to the bay on Friday forenoon, and dissuade the Circassians

from the attempt, when we were detained by the arrival of Ali-bí, who came, in consequence of the public letter we had written, to endeavour to prevail on us to remain, till he and some others made an attempt to get a congress called together, and the "wholesome" measures we recommended carried into effect. This visit was just over, and I had gone out for a few minutes, when some cannon-reports alarmed our hamlet; and by the time I got back to it, all the horses about the place were mounted and gone, and our host, another old man, and a lame one, were all the males to be seen. They dissuaded me from following the rest, who soon re-appeared and reported that the attack on the Russian boat had taken place, but had been defeated in consequence of the premature appearance and firing of some of the Circassians who were in ambush: they however consoled themselves in their disappointment by the persuasion that they had killed or wounded all the Russians in the boat but one, as he alone remained above her gunwales after their firing, and rowed it off to the ship, which had previously weighed anchor and approached the shore to protect it by firing her guns upon the Circassians.

We received this news rather gloomily, as proving that disgraceful and perhaps fatal effects had resulted from the want of our interference. But we have since had reason to believe that the Russians little deserve our sympathy; for although they were thus so cruelly brought in sight of the mutton and then thrown back upon their black bread, it is the conviction of our host that the marks which Mr. L. and I subse-

quently found set up upon the beach (a large board erected there, and some poles and bushes on a hillock above,) must have been for their use; and that they were in communication with somebody on shore, whom they had found means to corrupt. We infer from this, that the want of provisions was a mere pretext for getting intercourse established with those on shore for some ulterior purpose; and it is rather important to us, in a personal point of view, that these marks were at the end of the road by which the Russians could most easily, and without being met by any one, approach this house from the bay. In consequence of this discovery a guard has been placed on the bay at night to endeavour to detect the traitor.

Shamuz, speaking of the late reforms in Turkey, expressed his fears that they had come too late; and he inquired whether the former Turkish practice of putting to death the younger sons of the imperial family existed in any part of Europe! He says, that as that practice is contrary to the precepts of every religion, the disasters of Turkey may, perhaps, in part be ascribed to it. He is a favourable specimen of Circassian intellect.

Shortly after Mr. L——'s arrival, we jointly presented to the Circassians some 1400 lbs. of lead (for bullets) that came in his vessel, and not having heard anything of it, we began to fear it had gotten into bad hands. We have just learned the contrary. About a third part was sent to Ardler (or Arduwhatsh, as the Circassians call it,) to be divided among the warriors of the south; and the rest was divided with scrupulous impartiality among the inhabitants of these

two provinces. Two okas and a half fell to the share of this district; and those who have larger muskets get an extra portion.

I have been mortified to learn that it is doubtful whether the provinces that had combined to refuse recruits to the Russians will now stand by that engagement. Besni is said to have given way, and others it is feared will follow the example. On the other hand, the Abazaks have intimated to the people of these provinces, that their territories shall be plundered, and their children carried off, if they comply with the Russian demand. This change may be attributed in a great measure, I believe, to the hopes our arrival created not having yet been in any way realised.

Our letter to the chiefs soon produced effects. Visits from Mehmet Effendi and Ali-bí were its first fruits, and subsequently others have come to beg that we will defer our departure, and to promise that endeavours shall be made to assemble a respectable congress, and get our proposed measures carried into effect. The adoption of these measures being, in our eyes, by far the most important step that can be taken at present, we have consented to prolong our stay, and see the results of the promised endeavours.

Thermometer at noon 86½.

Thursday, 10th August.—To-day, one of the Russian deserters from Anapa has, in fulfilment of a promise of some standing, been brought to speak with us. He was one of the Anapa agricultural colonists; and by his account the scheme has proved a second "New Harmony," or Imperial man-trap. About 2000

peasants were brought to the colony amid splendid promises of wives, lands, houses, implements, and cattle, that were to be given them ; and such was the picture of hope held up (by agents and advertisements), that many slaves fled from their masters to this Muscovite "El Dorado," where they were to be partners with their Emperor, and to be speedily led by his paternal hand to opulence and ease. But alas for the results! Wives were not forthcoming, except for a very few; the cattle were plundered, and themselves kept in continual alarm by the Circassians. Out of 2000, there were 1600 taken for soldiers (on the plea that they had deserted from their masters), and the rest who are not married, fearful of a like fate, are making their escape as fast as opportunities offer,—and whither? into Circassia! and this all within a year! what a fearful and instructive peep into the Russian world!

Osman, who has been towards Pshat, brings word that Williamineff has sent to the Zazi-okûs to say that he is not going to attack Jûbghe (*this year*, he should have added), and that his orders are to retrace his steps, so soon as he has erected a fort at Tshopsin. I thought this a good opportunity to point out to the Circassians what has been their master-error, and therefore told them that whether the General speak truth in this instance or not, it shows his knowledge of their besetting weakness—a separation of interests—and his desire to profit by it. If Williamineff do not go to Jûbghe, it must, I think, be the presence or expectation of our fleet in the Black Sea that makes him desirous of not being far removed

from the garrison of Ghelenjík, and his line of retreat by the forts on the Abûn.

Since Wednesday last, the thermometer has ranged from 82 to 84° at noon. This has been the hottest day, the thermometer rising to 96° in the shade, with a northern exposure, and 124° in the sun. The sky has been clear, and the wind as usual easterly and strong.

Friday, 11*th*.—At 8 A.M., the thermometer in the shade stood at 70½, and at noon at 81°.

Word has come that the Russians of Anapa have revenged themselves for the Circassian forays by a sortie at break of day, with two pieces of cannon. They burnt or destroyed the effects of a dozen or fifteen families in their immediate neighbourhood, and captured about 500 head of cattle. But a few Circassians assembling suddenly, with Ali-bí at their head, attacked them on their retreat; and, although they could not save the cattle, they killed five or six soldiers—none of themselves having been hurt.

Saturday 12*th*.—Thermometer at 8 A.M. 64°, and at noon 77°. The wind for these two last days has been very strong from the eastward, in fact half a gale, with a cloudless sky, which appears strange to us Britons.

The news of to-day are from Tshopsin, and in effect that the indefatigable Guz Beg, with a band of Shapsuk men, have attacked the Russian foragers, killed and wounded many, and taken a number of prisoners, besides many stand of arms. Among the prisoners was a Russian officer, who reports that the Russian army since the commencement of the cam-

paign, has lost by desertion, death and disease (in addition to the slain) about one thousand men. Desertion is on the increase (eleven came over together), and dysentery exceedingly prevalent. That disease must, I think, be attributable to their provisions, and partly to the late fluctuations of temperature and their want of shelter, as there appears to be nothing to occasion it in the locality they are in.

A small Turkish vessel was seen to arrive from seaward among the Russian vessels at Tshopsin, and soon after not only they, but those at Pshat and Ghelenjík, indeed all but one steamer, set sail during the night, and have not since been seen. We trust this movement has been occasioned by bellicose systems in England.

Monday, 13*th*.—High wind from the eastward, increased probably by the great heat, continued all yesterday till the evening, and seems to have been still higher than I was aware of during the night, as I observed many branches of trees torn off and hay-cocks upset, &c.

Some Turks from Trebizond say that, some time since, the Russian consul there bought such a small vessel as was seen to arrive off Tshopsin the other day, which so far confirms our supposition of its having been despatched by him.

The getting together the proposed congress seems to have been up-hill work; but something has at length been accomplished, and we set out for it to-day. Shamuz has confessed—asking us first if we wished him to tell the plain truth—that his countrymen are in a state of great despondency; and although death

before surrender be their determination, yet their chief comfort has been in our remaining here so long, as it proved to them our conviction that England will not abandon them.

Tshûkhûps, Tuesday, 22nd.—On Monday week Mr. L. went to the hills above Ghelenjík for the purpose of seeing the state of the bay previously to our departing for the congress. He found there only one small vessel, which leads us fondly to suppose it possible that the rest may be gone to Sevastopol for greater security from the English fleet.

On Tuesday we set out towards the rendezvous appointed for the congress; and having met on the way a man sent to apprise us that it was deferred for two or three days, to admit of the arrival of some persons who had been sent for to Abazak, we proceeded more leisurely and made more stoppages by the way. Our first was about ten miles from Anapa, where we learnt more particulars of the Russian foray, and sudden, short, and destructive it seems to have been.

Our host there had to be sent for on our arrival, as he was one of thirty engaged at that time keeping watch over the Russian movements,—"shutting the stable," &c.; for two persons only had been on guard *before* the foray.

Passing next day within six miles of Anapa, we had a very good view of it from a hill, and saw eight vessels, two of them large and the others small, lying under its guns. We then crossed some hills covered with oak copse, and came upon another large valley bounded by similar low, rounded, copse-clad hills on all sides; but with an opening to the north-west

which discovered the waters of a large lake, called in Turkish "Ak-Deñiz," or the White Sea; beyond which appeared the hills of the Isle of Taman; and in this direction, it was said, the Russians had lately constructed a fortress called Jamatia. This valley, called Hokhoï, did not appear cultivated, (it was ravaged last year by the Russians) but hay had been made throughout the whole extent, as appeared from the infinity of haycocks; and it was said to be inhabited by the Circassians even up to the Russian fortress. We put up at its eastern extremity, at a house around which I counted about sixty others. Here there was some objection to receiving us (the host of the best house being from home) and we had set forward to seek other quarters when a man came bawling after us. As he brought us back I saw the hospitable hostess running to and fro, carrying cushions, &c., into the guest-house. It turned out that, on having heard who we were, she became fearful of the displeasure of her husband if she did not receive us.

Next day, (Wednesday) crossing the wooded hills to the north, we traversed in a north-east direction another large valley called Vastoghaï, bounded by lower hills. Much rich cultivation appeared in this valley, and it is further graced by several stately clumps of trees, especially on the banks of the small stream of the same name, on which, among other hamlets, we passed one Sefir Bey had possessed, but which is now all in ruins, as the Russians left it. Following up the course of the stream toward the south-east, we came to the base of the high wooded

hills that form the eastern boundary of the valley of Anapa, and of the one to the north-west of it*, and arrived at a hamlet very picturesquely situated, where the forlorn wife of Sefir Bey, and her two daughters, have found food and shelter from a liberal and lively old man of the middle class. He is seventy years of age, but appears fifteen years younger, and his thick-set short form, and hale look, give promise that for many years to come he will still be able (if permitted) to carry on his forays against the Russians, from which it would appear the greater part of his substance has been derived. He has crossed the Kûban, from which he is distant only twenty miles, annually and almost monthly, for the last fifty years! Lately he was one of thirty who captured 105 Russian horses, and I saw two of six which he had lately taken *alone* from five Russian peasants. Nor are his exploits merely predatory; for he goes to the wars accompanied by his five sons, (he lost another lately in an expedition across the Kûban,) the eldest of whom he obliged the other day to *train* himself by attacking alone two out-posted Cossacks. The young man slew one, and captured the other. It was only last year that Zepsh (the father) was engaged in an affair with the Russians, near Anapa, when Ali-bí of Ozerek was made prisoner, and carried off by a party of twenty. Old Zepsh followed them alone, and, concealing himself, and watching his opportunity, till three of the party with their prisoner were separated

* The former is called Hokhoï-sûk *little*, and the other extending to the Kûban, Hokhoï-shko *great*.

H. Warren lith. from a Sketch by Sir Stamford Bell, Esq.r

TSHÛRÛKE-OKÛ TÛGHÛZ, BADJI-OKÛ MEHMET,
& VORDEZAV-OKÛ ZEKSE.

from the rest, he rushed upon them with drawn sabre, and killing or wounding them all, mounted Ali-bí (who had received seven wounds) behind him and galloped off! This extraordinary feat I have heard told by many.

On Friday evening I took a ride with him, to see the site of a famed ancient fortress. I found it situated on the top of one of the highest and steepest hills, and it seems to me probable that the situation had been chosen by the Genoese (for our host attributed the fort to the *Franks* or "*Genoese*") as commanding a road through the hills from the plains of the Kûban to Sûgûljak and Ghelenjík—the best places for shipment. Towards the upper part of the hill two ridges were shown me, as having been walls with gates in them; and on the summit, where an excellent well is said to have existed (not long since), I found a pretty large space surrounded by a mound, but of what the mound was composed I had no means of ascertaining, for the whole was overgrown so thickly with trees and underwood, that I had difficulty in making my way, almost on all-fours, over but a small portion of it. Zepsh insisted, however, that in his father's time there existed a good stone inclosure, within which they used to secure their cattle and horses; for a portion of the hills, which is unwooded, has very rich grazing upon it. A wonderful story is told of the taking of the castle by some redoubted champion, who entered it alone sword in hand, after his *cannons* had breached its walls. But who he was, or whence he came, was unknown. The tradition appeared to me too vague

to be followed up, so I inquired rather after what had been found on the hill. Swords of a great length, and coins of gold—said to resemble exactly the one I obtained at Semez, excepting that they were larger—were mentioned as having frequently been found; but they had all long since been disposed of, and my only hope is in the promise Zepsh made, to keep for us English any coins that may be found hereafter.

The Russians lately attempted a passage from Anapa by these hills, and had ascended their western acclivity when they were repulsed, and many of them killed, by Zepsh and a handful of his neighbours.

On Saturday the 19th, I was summoned to the long promised congress, and had to attend it alone; Mr. L. being unfortunately confined to the house by indisposition. It was held at a hamlet about a couple of miles from that in which we were staying, and was attended by about a hundred and ten individuals. Till dinner-time the day was spent in deliberations among themselves. After a substantial repast for the whole assemblage, business again commenced, and an invitation was sent me to attend the meeting. I found it assembled around a tree, within whose ample shade and shelter (for it had rained hard) straw had been laid in a wide circle, as seating for the "members." A felt cloak having been spread for me, and an invitation to address them being given me, I said that many of those I saw present had been informed already of the measures we had deemed necessary for them to adopt in the present circumstances of the country; but having found such diffi-

culty in getting some of those measures put in execution, and so much time having elapsed, we had resolved to press them no further at present, but to limit our interference in their affairs to an urgent recommendation to them to employ the means they thought most effectual for bringing into the field a large force, provisioned for a month, which force could be apportioned as they thought best, both for watching the fortresses and preventing such disastrous forays of the Russians as the one that had of late taken place near Anapa; and for the purpose of harassing the army under Williamineff, and limiting its power to do mischief. I then told them that we greatly feared, from their protracted inaction, that despondency was widely spread among them, and I recapitulated the reasons against giving way to such a feeling, and the good grounds of hope that had lately been afforded them, by the various, yet in one respect corresponding, intelligence that had arrived from different quarters: all tending to prove that something was being done for them in Europe.

Shamuz and Mensûr were the principal respondents, who spoke to this effect: That our protracted stay among them had been of infinite benefit in sustaining their hope that England would yet befriend them, and the encouragement thence derived had, they said, been of more advantage to them than if they had received an auxiliary force of 2000 or 3000 men, or a ship-load of ammunition; but whoever had told us there was despondency among them (on this head Mensûr was particularly energetic) had falsely slandered them. That the harvest (a matter of great

importance) was not yet secured, and that when it was, they would prove to us whether their courage had abated or not, and that if necessary 15,000 men could be brought together at a few hours' notice. They then begged of me that we would not quit this part of the country at present, or at least for a short time, within which they said that the letters we and they expected would arrive and inform us what hopes they had from abroad*; that if we felt any ennui at remaining too long at one place, every house was open to us, and all would be glad to do their best to entertain us. Sundry other civilities were added, for which I thanked them, and replied, that our conclusion as to the existence of despondency was drawn from our not seeing among them any general preparations to take the field; and that as to any ennui we might have felt, it could only proceed from the same cause, as we were with a host who left us nothing to desire. [Some high encomiums had been passed upon him by the previous speakers.] That as they appeared to think our presence so beneficial, and promised to take more active measures shortly, we should comply with their request, and remain among them for the present. I then brought the parley to a close, and, as it seemed to me, amid general satisfaction, of which Mensûr and Shamuz gave me additional assurance apart. Among other matters de-

* It will be seen hereafter that these wily sages were keeping us in play until they had satisfied themselves, by correspondence with Sefir Bey, as to the source of a libel against us which had been written, in the Bey's name, by a wretch of the name of Michael, then his servant, and now Russian Consul, at Sinope.

bated on this occasion, was that of the person brought before us at Abûn-bashi, as caught in the act of endeavouring to get into the fortress of Anapa. He was also in attendance, having been all this time detained, as also his horse, arms, &c., as correspondence about him had been carrying on between the people of these parts and those of his province, Abazak. It appears that he is of a noble Abazak family, and has often been in the wars. One of his Russian documents was an attestation from the Russian Chancellery of his relationship to certain Tatar families in the Crimea, whose seals it bore; and another a Russian passport to enable him (as he says) to visit his friends in that country. These were explained to us by a Russian captain of cavalry, (of German descent, in which language we conversed) who resides where we were, having deserted from Anapa on account of the degraded situation he found himself reduced to (on account of a duel with his colonel), and his despair of being able to improve it. But the most suspicious documents were two in Turkish—without seal or signature—appointing a meeting between two individuals. His explanation of the whole might or might not be true, yet he deserved punishment for having broken a law of this province, which prohibits all intercourse with the Russians. But on the other hand was the danger of irritating his countrymen, who had sent an attestation of his loyalty and respectability, signed by four judges. We therefore advised that he and his effects should be sent home, accompanied by a letter saying, that on account of the friendly relation be-

tween the two provinces his punishment was left to his countrymen; that it was hoped they would make it such as would prevent a recurrence of the evil; and that they should be severely upbraided for the general laxity they displayed in regard to communication with the territories of the common enemy.

Having expressed a wish to see the Kûban, we set out in that direction on the 20th, with a large escort, and crossing the fertile valley of Vastoghaï, came to some equally luxuriant hills, on its northern side, which had latterly been cultivated by the 300 serfs of Sefir Bey, and had formerly been part of the territory occupied by those 10,000 Noghaïs whom Russia compelled to return within her frontier, by carrying off in a foray a large proportion of their women and children, and refusing to return them except on that condition. I presume it was these children of the steppes who denuded this district of its trees, as none but sapling oaks, the growth of some ten years, were to be seen. Here and there, however, were abundant crops of millet, which the Circassians were reaping and carrying off in waggons, as soon as cut, to safer quarters towards the south. That afternoon we put up at a hamlet on the declivity of the wooded hills that form the southern boundary of the valley of the Kûban, from which we were distant only half an hour's ride, and could trace its course by its skirting of magnificent trees, through which, in its windings, a gleam of the waters shone out occasionally. Beyond these rose the Russian hills, of which more anon. Our hosts

were four brothers relatives of Shamuz, and said to be uncommonly rich in flocks and herds. We were scarcely seated in their guest-house when a person brought in and laid before me a ferruginous mass of indurated clay, and of sea-shells in a high state of preservation. Being both in search of fossils, we eagerly inquired the situs of these the first we had seen, and learning that it was close at hand, we set out for it. It is an oblong hill with a surface of loose black earth, amid which the fossils spoken of are found in great quantities; and some hills to the eastward were spoken of as being still more prolific. We brought off some of the best specimens.

On the 21st we rode about three hours to the eastward, along the same oak copse-clad hills, to this place, the hamlet of Arslan (lion) Gheri, a relative of Mensûr, and said to be quite as brave. On our way we diverged to the left to see the Kûban, and (as I hoped) to taste the water. But on reaching the summit of one of the highest neighbouring hills, we learned it was in vain to attempt getting a nearer view, as the river is fenced in to a considerable distance by deep marshes, which we saw too clearly to think of penetrating them. Close to their verge, rich crops of millet were to be seen, upon which many reapers were busily employed, and the general cultivation on the face of the hills seemed to increase as we advanced. But, on the opposite side of the river, nothing of the kind was visible, even with our telescope, save a few haycocks at a great distance, on the top of a hill. The country there, for twelve or fifteen miles, rises into a ridge of some three to four

hundred feet in height, on the western part of which were some windmills, and not far from them, on the summit, a Russian fort. To the east of this ridge appeared a dead level, the varied colour of which gave some show of cultivation.

The pleasure of this excursion was marred by my Georgian falling from his horse and breaking his arm. So soon as we got to our quarters, a surgeon was sent for (whose ragged dress gave slender indication of the lucrativeness of his practice); and Mehmet Effendi (who also practises) and another set to work with their knives and soon produced two neat wooden cases for the arm, which was cleverly dressed with a long tight bandage, smeared with a mixture of flour, the white of eggs, and salt.

Our host here being accounted very rich, I may enumerate his stock, as a specimen of what obtains that consideration. He has upwards of seventy serfs, two to three thousand sheep, one hundred oxen and milch kine, and three to four hundred brood-mares. But it seems scarcely possible for one to become really very rich, so long as it is considered no shame for any one to ask for whatever he wishes, and a great shame to refuse his request. In this way we brought loss to our host, for one chief of our cortège demanded of him, *and got*, one hundred sheep, and another sixty sheep—but not for us. For a long time past we have bought sheep for ourselves at Semez, as we thought our daily mutton too heavy a tax on an individual.

Semez, the 25th.—On the 22nd, having declined (to show that amusement was not the object we came

here for) an offer that was made us to jaunt about and be entertained at different houses, we proceeded on our homeward way to the hamlet of our friend Sûbash, in the vale of Anapa (or Hokhoï-sûk) and there made a little detour to see a remarkable stone. This we found to be a fragment of sculptured marble about eight feet high, twelve or fourteen inches broad, and six or eight thick. The sculpture extends along the whole length, in five lines, one of which is an ample and very graceful wreath. The marble stands erect, as a grave-stone, and around it are many graves, marked by common stones. It might be difficult to find whence it had been brought to its present site; but it seems most probable that it formerly graced some edifice of the Aspourgianoi, who dwelt on the north side of the southern mouth of the Kûban, or of the Greek colonists of Phanagoria.

On the 23rd we returned to Semez, and all our late pleasing visions were dispelled by the arrival of Mr. L——'s Greek from the southward, where he had seen a Turk, who arrived by the last vessel from Constantinople, and reported, that there are no English ships of war in the Black Sea; that they had come to the Dardanelles, when the Sultan said it was unnecessary for them to proceed further, as the dispute between England and Russia would be otherwise arranged! This may serve at once as proof of the great interest that was excited in the East by the capture of the Vixen, and as a specimen of the stuff we are tantalised with from day to day, and which might make one almost believe that the souls of a whole race of English daily newspaper

scribes had transmigrated hitherward. To add to our vexations it is said, that letters for us arrived by the vessel just spoken of; that is some three weeks ago; and yet we cannot get hold of the man who is said to have them, although we have twice sent after him. It has seemed strange, that neither of us has ever yet received a letter since our arrival in this country, and the dilatoriness of him who now has those in keeping, gives some clue to the mystery.

At a marriage-feast Georgi attended the other day, between Pshat and Ghelenjík, the greater number of those present went to an ancient cross, and, taking off their bonnets, kissed it. It is said that but a small proportion of the people are as yet circumcised Mussulmans. I am inclined to believe this, from the small proportion I see say their prayers.

Semez, Wednesday, 30th August.—The day before yesterday, Prince Atshaïgag-okû, of Psadûg, arrived here, accompanied by almost all the leading men of these two provinces; and when they left us yesterday, after a deal of interesting conversation, it seemed as if they had taken all our strength with them; for we were both unwell.

About three weeks ago, we sent this prince—at the recommendation of our host—a friendly message and some presents, on account of the important services he had rendered these two provinces for some years past. And, having learned a few days back, that he had arrived at Adûghûm, we immediately sent Selim Bey, and one of our servants, to express the pleasure we should have in seeing him either here or else-

where, before he returned home. The Bey brought word he would come here, and accordingly, the day before yesterday, we had just swallowed the last mouthful of our dinner, when those who dined after us had their repast abruptly interrupted, and their tables borne off amid suppressed cries of, "The prince! the prince!" We found him a mild, handsome, and very intelligent-looking person, of middle stature, and some ten or fifteen years past the meridian of life. His deportment shows more high-breeding than we have seen in this country, and seems to prove him born to command. Infinitely more respect was accorded him both by the chiefs and inferiors, than we have seen paid to any other individual. Indeed, the Prince of Janat, whose descent is highly distinguished (Sultanic), seemed to be the only one who felt at liberty to be seated in his presence. His object in coming here appeared to be threefold; 1*mo*, to encourage the people of these provinces to persevere in their warfare; 2*do*, to take counsel respecting the answer he and his countrymen should make to a Sultan, and a Circassian noble in the Russian service, who have been sent on a coaxing mission to the Eastern provinces on the Kûban, to obtain, in return for many fine promises and fair speeches on the part of the Emperor, an address to him on his expected visit to the Russian frontier; and, 3*tio*, to see, and converse with, us Englishmen. But his visit is not avowedly political, for fear of his being embroiled with his Russian neighbours, and his conversation with us was apart and private.

We think we see in the above-mentioned second item, about which we have received a letter from the provinces of Hatukwoi, (a translation of which I send you,)* proof of apprehension on the part of Russia of European interference in behalf of this country, which she fain would avert by producing such a document as is here spoken of. And in support of this supposition, the prince reports that it is said in Russia, that a congress of sovereigns is about to be held in Europe. We therefore strongly conjured him —by his hopes of yet rescuing his province from her present precarious position—to urge his countrymen to refuse, at all hazards, any such document as the Russian emissaries sought to obtain from them; as it would place them irretrievably in their power. We are about writing a letter to the same effect to the chiefs of Hatukwoi.

Since the prince left us, we hear he has powerfully seconded our efforts to rouse the people hereabouts to action, and that an extraordinarily great congress of the chiefs of these two provinces, and of Abazak, for concerting war operations on a large scale, is to be held forthwith. We are to set out for Adûghûm to-morrow to be present at it.

Prince Pshûgûï stated here, that a person from this valley was latterly in his neighbourhood, and having been guilty of some misconduct, he got the Russians to imprison him; that he has subsequently learned that, for some time past, this person, (whose house is not far from that which we inhabit) has acted as

* See Appendix.

a spy for the Russians,* that he had arranged with them for our capture, by means of the vessel I have spoken of (as having had her boat's crew attacked), and others which were to have followed her, and commenced operations by dealing for provisions with the people; and that he put up marks in the bay to direct these vessels to the landing-place, which afforded the readiest access to our quarters!

In the cortège of the prince came an elderly judge, who deserves the "passing tribute" of a line. While his occupation of interpreter lasted (till very late) he kept his place at the further end of the room; but no sooner had his chief, and the other guests, composed themselves to rest, than he came forward to the side of my divan, where I was reading, and made me give him a lesson in the English alphabet, sticking at it most perseveringly, till he knew the pronunciation of each letter. He then set to work to copy their forms, and when (about two in the morning) I asked him if he ever slept, he replied, "you ought not to mind sitting up, as this is the first time I have ever seen Englishmen." He is said to be a very clever person, and to have taught himself Turkish reading and writing almost without assistance.

On parting next morning, the prince exchanged coats with me, telling me that his was woven and made up by his wife. It is profusely braided with silver lace. We presented him with a handsome

* His offence was in all probability committed in anticipation of being sent across the Kûban, (near which the prince lives) to the Russian prison.

double-barreled fowling-piece and a bow, much to the gratification of all the other chiefs present, who seemed glad to be aided in rewarding the services they had received of him.

Adûghûm, 4th September.—On Thursday last, we set out at an easy rate for this place, and had again an opportunity of traversing and admiring the beautiful banks of the Adûghûm, and of regretting the want of good fishing-tackle to take some of the very large trouts which abound in that stream, and which the Circassians have no other way of coming at than with rifle-balls! Rest, rest! perturbed spirit of Walton!

A great part of the millet harvest is over, but it will take ten days or a fortnight to finish it completely.

The congress took place yesterday in a stately wood hard by. It was attended by almost all the leading people of these two provinces; but deliberations were changed in their nature, and abbreviated by a report of a vessel having arrived at Shepseghû with two Englishmen, powder, balls, &c., which have been confirmed from various quarters. The result of the debate was that Shamuz and one of our servants should proceed immediately in quest of the Englishmen, to see if they have brought any news or letters, and to invite them and the chiefs in the south to another congress, to be held this day week. It was suggested that one of us should go to meet our countrymen; but we have in hand matters of import (an interview with Prince Pshûgûï, and the finishing and despatch of our letter to Hatukwoï) and

we have moreover, very little faith in the correctness of Circassian newsmongers. We deemed it therefore most expedient to send in the meanwhile.

I must not omit the closing scene of the Congress, as it is characteristic and common, although I have not happened to witness anything of the kind before. The conclave was still constituted, and formed an oblong square, when a man on Mr. L——'s tall horse (as I thought) appeared at one end of it, and commenced speaking, or rather bawling, from a most powerful pair of lungs, with much action and the most admirable volubility and earnestness. What under heaven was the cause of his *emportement* I could not conceive. He seemed to speak sometimes *at us*, which made me think he was laying claim to the horse, as having been stolen from him. Then there was an occasional smile on the faces of some of his countrymen, which made me think he might be a madman whom they were humouring (as Mussulmans do). Again, the remarkable rapidity of his delivery gave him the appearance of being an improvisator exhibiting for our entertainment. All these surmises were however sadly wide of the mark, as I learnt at the close of the long address that it was a premeditated effusion of piety, patriotism, and gratitude; and the occasional "amens" of the auditory, if I had happened to have noticed them, would have told me as much.

Addresses of this kind are delivered at the close of every congress, in which matters of national import have been debated. A loud-voiced ready speaker is selected, and the elders instruct him as to the sub-

jects that must be impressed upon the minds of those present; with which are combined an invocation of blessing upon the Padisha, an assurance of the blessing of martyrdom to him who falls in battle, &c. On this occasion the extraordinary subjects were, an exhortation to each one to be watchful of the conduct of those in his neighbourhood*; and to call upon the people generally to "show hospitality and kindness to these strangers," who have come from afar, "and subjected themselves to privations they are unused to for our good only."

Semez, Friday 6th.—On Tuesday, having sent word to the Prince Pshûgûï, that we were about to set out for home, he, and an immense cortège of chiefs, with their followers, met us in a field on the way, where he, the Prince of Janat, and we—having gone apart for a consultation—seated ourselves on the withered grass, and had a long conversation, in the unmitigated blaze of the mid-day sun, which made me think what sort of a thing a stroke from him might be.

The prince told us he also was returning home, having heard of the arrival at Psadûg, and the illness of his brother-in-law, a Crimean sultan, from whom he expects full accounts of what is going on in Russia, and he promised to communicate them to us. The purport of his speaking was to prove to us that it was from necessity only that he was on his present terms with the Russians, his country being

* It had been reported that some persons had lately gone into the fortress of Anapa for salt, thinking themselves justified in doing so, in consequence of the permission given to the two Sinope merchants!

small and open, and the villages so large (some of 400 houses), that much more mischief might be done there than here in a short time; that he was moreover not yet sure how far he could reckon on support from the Abazaks on their southern frontier, as they had not yet generally taken the oath they had promised to take to that effect. He seemed anxious also that his attachment to the cause of independence should be made known in England, and that we should believe that his present visit to these parts was caused solely by his wish to see us, and consult with us and some of his countrymen about their common cause, and not from any wish to get presents (of which by the way he has got an immense number, horses, coats of mail, bows, &c. &c.) He also expressed an earnest wish that we would pay a visit to his province as soon as possible, assuring us of the warmest reception, and of our effecting much good. On our part we renewed to him our expressions of confidence in the favourable disposition of England toward this country, and urged the great necessity there was of preventing the chiefs of his province and those of the adjacent provinces, of whom testimonials of their allegiance to the Emperor were now required, granting any such. We promised a visit as soon as possible, and to urge the Abazaks to conclude the desired convention with him and his neighbours. I trust he may not suffer for his intercourse with us, for his past endeavours to serve his country have brought upon him, seven times, the penalty of Russian hostility. His hamlet is immediately opposite the fortress of Yekaterinodar.

Thursday, 14*th*.—Shamuz returned this day week without accomplishing his errand. He met on his way a brother of Zazi-okû Mehmet, who had been to the south, and seen the latter who came from Constantinople with the Englishman (one it seems, and a Frenchman, an interpreter, I presume), the powder, balls, &c.; and our old host was so glad to hear this confirmation of so agreeable a piece of news, that he hastened back to communicate it himself; and his breast being opened by joy, he made full confession of his love for us, exceeding, he says, that for his own children.

As there was now no reason to doubt the intelligence in question, Mr. L——, with Ali-bí for an escort, set out last Saturday to find our countryman wherever he may be, and I remain here—somewhat against my will—to humour the people in their great anxiety that we should not both leave them at present.

Word was again brought me the day before yesterday that the Emperor is expected forthwith on the frontier; and that the Circassians of Psadûg, Hatukwoi, Temeguí, &c., had again refused to give the Russians troops. It was further stated that many persons from these provinces had gone to Ardler to join in the war against the Russians, who are said to be in a dreadful state from sickness and fighting, which it is said never ceases. A deserter from Anapa has just reported that 4000 of that army are already "*hors de combat*."

19*th*.—The Circassians had two envoys at Constantinople for some time, one of whom was to have come

with me, but missed his passage, remained there some time longer, caught the plague, and died. The other, who lately arrived shortly before the Englishman, has been here; having come some thirty or forty miles to get prompted by me as to what he shall say to a large meeting which is convened for the purpose of examining him on oath. Poor fellow, he seems to lack invention (which he appears to wish me to supply), and has very little to ground it upon; having been expelled (Luca tells me) from Sefir Bey's for quarrelling with the other envoy, and thus placed out of the way of learning what was going forward. This his pride will not let him own; and thus he has been pestered for some time past, and eaten up, by having twenty or thirty persons at his house at one time cross-questioning him incessantly about news, and putting him (who has nothing to tell) to his oath occasionally. He prepared to depart to his task very reluctantly; for I counselled him to say nothing but what was true, and not to imitate his many lying predecessors. I gave him no presents to speak well of us, about which some hints had been thrown out; but when pressed by him once more for suggestions, I told him he might say, that since the capture of the English vessel the principal negotiations had been carried on between London and St. Petersburgh, and had consequently been removed from the sphere of his observation; and that he might bear testimony to the increased respect which the English had of late enjoyed in Constantinople, and of the friendship which prevails between the Turks and them. These hints re-assured him a little.

LETTER XI.

A CIRCASSIAN "LIKE-WAKE" — ARRIVAL OF ANOTHER ENGLISHMAN—THE EMPEROR AT GHELENJÍK —THE RUSSIAN ARMY RECROSSES THE KÛBAN— DETECTION AND PUNISHMENT OF SPIES—PREDICAMENT OF THE EASTERN PROVINCES—ANTIQUARIAN RESEARCH—FEAST OF MEREM—GEOLOGY.

SEMEZ, *September 25th*, 1837.

MY DEAR ——. Kerim Gheri, a very valiant *Vork* (or noble) of this valley, crossed the Kûban a few days ago, with a small party who swam the river during the night, towing after them a small boat containing their arms. They had not been long landed when they were surrounded by a Russian ambuscade, that poured a hot fire upon them. They forced their way, nevertheless, through the Russians, and recrossed the river, and were on their way to their homes, when it was discovered that Kerim was dangerously wounded by a ball through the body, of which he had not said a word. He died at Adûghûm (not half-way home), and was there buried. He was much esteemed, and great numbers of persons from all the country round—those of this place among others—have been to his hamlet, which is hard by, to take part in the "wake," or lamentation for his death.

I shall embrace this occasion to give you an account of the ceremonies in use on such occasions.

When, as in this case, the body is not forthcoming, a cushion is placed on a mat at the side of a room; upon and around it are the clothes of the deceased; and, on the wall immediately above, are suspended his arms. The room is filled with the females, and the female relatives and friends of the family, seated: and, at the door, stands the widow erect. At each side of the cushion are seated the daughters or some young female relatives. On the green before the door the men assemble. One of them approaches the door, uttering a wailing cry, which is responded to by the females inside, who rise while he enters softly with his hands over his eyes, and kneels before the cushion, placing his forehead upon it. The young girls on each side assist him to rise, and he retires. The rest follow, one by one, until the whole have performed this ceremony; but the old men generally, instead of uttering the lament, speak some short sentence of consolation or endurance, such as, "it is the will of God." This larger assemblage of men and women lasts for three days; but the females of the family and its immediate relatives must be in attendance to receive mourners in this manner for a fortnight; and the clothes and other relics of the deceased remain as described until the greater funeral repast, which is given either six months after, or on the anniversary of the death. The very poorest never omit this entertainment; but the rich give other repasts at intervals of a week, a fortnight, and forty days after the death. If the clothes of the deceased were not good at his death, new are made, and the relatives contribute different articles, such as shoes,

leggings, leather drinking-cups (for travelling), &c., which are laid with the rest of the things on the mat, and are subsequently distributed to the priest of the neighbourhood and those who assisted at the ceremonies. The family can retain nothing except the arms which the deceased bore and the horse he rode, which, out of respect to his memory, is kept six months in the stable and well fed during that time. When one has died a natural death at home, his body is immediately washed, enveloped in new white cotton or linen cloth, and buried within three or four *hours*, the immediate neighbours assisting in the first portion of the lamentation. If he was killed in battle (that is a *bonâ fide* battle, not a mere excursion for booty; for a decided line of distinction is drawn), he is interred in the clothes he was killed in and without washing; it being supposed that in this state he will be at once received into paradise, as having fallen in defence of his country; but if he survive his wound some days, he is presumed to have again sinned (perhaps in regretting his wound, or expressing impatience under it), and must, therefore, be washed and dressed for his immortal journey. The same ceremonies are performed at the death of women and children, but the assemblages are less numerous.

In the beginning of this month wild grapes (small, red, and pleasantly flavoured) were ripe, and mostly eaten by the birds. I have no doubt the grape might be advantageously cultivated here. I have also found a wild hop, which elsewhere is said to be abundant: its bitter seems strong and good.

The Turkish title of Bey is given to very few, and those only of Sultanic or Pshe (princely) descent; while the Vork (nobles) are spoken of by their individual names only. In addressing even princes, their title is seldom made use of.

26*th*.—We have had our equinoctial gale, and that pretty severely. It commenced ten days ago, with two days of very heavy rain, and twelve to fourteen degrees diminution of temperature at mid-day: that is, from 80° and 82° to 68°; and the thermometer has since kept falling, till within the last three days that it has stood at 63°. On almost every alternate day there have been showers, which have thoroughly moistened the parched and cracked soil, and spread beneath us a lively green carpet worthy of spring. The hills on the opposite side of the valley also look somewhat better for this change in the weather; and much need they had of it, for so singed were they by the long drought that their stony backs shone out, and made them look not unlike so many great mangy dogs.

I have added a Polish servant to our establishment, and am highly pleased with the acquisition, as he is an active, tidy, obliging young man. It is five years since he deserted from the Russians; he speaks Circassian fluently, and is now busy learning French. He is a great favourite among the natives, whom he has often joined in battle. His master had freed him, and would have sent him to Constantinople; but that the Turks who took him there might sell him. He has therefore confided him to us, by which it would seem that we infidel English are more trusted

than the others. He (Stanislav) says, that, after the revolution, the Russians sent from Poland 32,000 boys of from ten to twelve years of age; and Luca says there arrived in Georgia about a similar number of young Poles. This is the effectual way to weed out patriotism!

Our equinoctial gale has blown from the west; and one day it blew so hard that ten Russian transports were stranded: four near Anapa, five to the north of it, and one near Pshat. Some of these vessels were plundered by the Circassians; others the soldiers of the forts protected. A man from Vastoghaï, just arrived with Sefir Bey's wife on a visit to us, reports that the gale two days ago was such as had never been experienced before in that quarter: men with their horses having been blown down, houses overturned, all the stacked corn blown away, &c. &c.

On the 20th, the Russian army returned to Ghelenjík from Tshopsin. They performed the journey in five days, and almost without opposition, the patience of the Circassians having been exhausted in waiting for them. A Russian deserter from Doba has just been here, and reports that Williamineff is about to return by the Abûn, across the Kûban, to meet the Emperor; and that he takes with him seven or eight thousand men. His army (this man and others say) consisted originally of 12,000, about 1000 of whom have been killed by the Circassians, and 1000 to 1200 wounded. Of these, one-half may be again fit for service. About 250 men are left in Pshat, and 500 in Tshopsin; and fourteen pieces of cannon have been placed in the former, and twenty

in the latter, which is much the larger fort. All these cannons (and some bombs also) are of very large calibre. There has been much disease in the army, but not many have died of it. This man, like the rest, describes the soldiers as highly discontented; and, he says, many prefer death to their ordinary treatment, which they have learnt to be "worse than that of dogs in Europe."

28*th.*—At length I have had the pleasure of receiving letters from England; but the pleasure is damped by my learning the disastrous decision come to by our government in regard to the capture of the Vixen, which, if communicated to the Circassians of this neighbourhood, must be told them with caution, to prevent the discouragement such news is likely to create at this crisis.

England has thus, in some measure, ratified the treaty of Adrianople, by which Russia assumed a right to *the whole of Circassia,* in violation of the solemn and reiterated engagements she had previously come under to England, France, &c., not to make any accession to her territory, nor to seek any exclusive advantage. The power of England must, I fear, come into general question, and still more the existence of the spirit of honour that once animated her counsels. A fatality seems to attend all opposition to the genius of Russia, which turns the deliberations of even our "potent, grave, and reverend signors" to her advantage.

Shamuz has returned after a fortnight's absence, and he adds to my depression of spirits by stating, that part of his time was unsuccessfully spent in

endeavouring to raise a force to attack the Russians. The Russians, moreover, have established a trading-mart on the side of the Kûban, near the Abûn, in Shapsuk, and have put in charge of it a renegade Circassian noble in their service, who, by presents, good bargains, and cajolery, is doing all in his power to seduce the people of that province, many of whom have listened to his seductions, and are crossing the river to trade at this mart. Emissaries from Russia are said to have been in this province, also endeavouring to detach the people from the national cause. Hûssein, a respectable merchant of this neighbourhood, has just returned from Abazak, and informs me that some of the people of that province having captured eighteen head of cattle in the Russian territory, and driven them through Psadûg, have been obliged by the rest to restore them; in order to preserve the people of the latter province from a violation of their engagements with Russia. This incident may not be considered as a proof of a temporising spirit on the part of the Abazaks, who, our host says, remain stanch; but it is a curious illustration of the strange division of interests which Russia has succeeded in introducing in these frontier provinces. But the worst news yet is a report made by Hûssein, of his having met on his way four men from Tshopsin, with four Russian or Polish deserters, whom they were taking to Yekaterinodar to sell to the Russians. Hûssein remonstrated with them, but in vain; they replied they wanted money. I immediately informed Shamuz of it, and told him that unless measures were taken forthwith to have these

Circassians punished for a crime so fatal to the interests of the country, I should consider its cause hopeless, and act accordingly. He replies that, whenever the other Englishman arrives, a large congress is to be held, and something will then be determined on in regard to the punishment of these traitors. There are some bad subjects about Tshopsin.

30th.—Word having arrived that an emissary from the Russian general at Yekaterinodar has come to the northward of this, near the Kûban, and was inquiring particularly concerning our names, &c., our active old host has set out for that quarter to inquire into the matter.

After the last taking of Anapa by the Russians, and the compulsory cession of it and Sûjûk-kaleh to them by Turkey, the Circassians and Turks built a small town at the ruins of Sûjûk-kaleh, in which there were all sorts of shops, to the number of 250. The Russians destroyed the whole by their ship-guns, about five years ago.

Some particulars have been told me respecting the origin of Anapa. After the subjugation of the Crimea by the Russians, many of its inhabitants fled to this part of Circassia, and by their advice Sefir Bey's father determined to build a fort on his property. The locality of Anapa was selected for the purpose, and artificers were brought from Turkey to construct it. But the neighbours of the Bey violently opposed his project, and it was not carried into execution without bloodshed.

Sefir Bey began his career inauspiciously. His

father died when he was young, and his uncle, under pretext that his deceased brother had married below his rank, and that the ancient and pure blood of the Zahn-okûs was in danger of contamination, sold the young Bey as a serf for only 100 measures of grain. But the retainers of his father sometime afterwards procured his restoration, and reinstated him in the possessions and honours of his ancestors; and it is said that, although no one serves his family at present, his adherents and serfs will all return to their allegiance whenever he returns to live among them. His mother belonged to the second class of vork (nobles),—that is, those ennobled by the princes, an act which is thus performed. The prince, in presence of witnesses, presents the individual with a horse, a sabre, two oxen, and sometimes a few serfs, at the same time declaring him a vork. This class is not numerous, nor can its rank be transmitted by descent.

Sefir Bey's lady, as I said, honoured us with a visit the other day, and remained a night at the family-house. The morning after her arrival she sent me word that she would have come to see me in the guest-house, but that she heard I was much engaged with my letters. This message I did not receive until after her departure, and was thus prevented from replying to it. I am told she is very grateful for some coverlets we have presented to her, as the nights now get cold, and she had scarce any covering for herself and her daughters. Nothing is more valuable in this country at present than clothing, except perhaps powder and lead.

The princess is of a very eminent Noghaï family of princely rank, who I presume are prevented from doing anything for her by the Russians. You may recollect my mentioning that 10,000 Noghaïs had formerly crossed the Kûban, and settled themselves in Hokhoï in Sefir Bey's neighbourhood, but were forced back again by the Russians capturing their wives and children. Shamuz says that anciently the Noghaïs possessed all this north-west part of the country, the Çircassians occupying the districts to the south and east of them *.

The atalik of Sefir Bey's son (who is about twelve years of age) accompanied the Hanun (princess) here, and slept by choice on a stage erected between two trees in front of our house, which was a favourite locality with many both by day and night during the hotter weather. His horse, which he had tied up almost literally under his nose, was next morning missing, and could not be found; so that he had to walk home. The supposition was that it had been stolen; horse-stealing being the most common crime in this country. How far this conjecture was correct I know not, but the horse has since been recovered. This reminds me however to tell you the usages in the case of such a theft. The host of the visiter is held bound to pay for the horse, if required to do so. If the thief be discovered he is compelled to make restitution, and is fined to the value of six hundred piastres, which are the perquisite of the host, if he have paid for the horse. If the thief be found on

* Elbrûz is here called Noghaï-Hûkha, the mountain of the Noghaïs.

the horse, his arms and everything he has on the animal become the property of the person who seizes him. This liability of a host extends to all kinds of property, but it does not appear to be always enforced; and six hundred piastres is the general amount of fine, no matter what be the value of the article stolen.

An atalik not only feeds, clothes, and educates his pupil gratuitously, but gives him a horse and arms; in short, he appears to stand in every respect in the stead of the father, and to enjoy more regard than he does. Of this I have seen some evidence in the conduct of the youngest son of this family, rather a fiery youth. The atalik trusts for his recompence to the spoil his foster-son may take in battle, and to the gratitude of himself and family after the tutelage is over. It lasts six or eight years. Much of course depends upon the discrimination of the father in selecting ataliks for his sons. I have not heard of any misconduct on their part; but a noble at Adûghûm who had lost his voice and applied to me to restore it, attributed his misfortune to the poverty of the atalik he had been placed with, which prevented his being properly clothed. Daughters are sometimes, but not commonly, placed out in this manner for their education.

Friday, 6th October.—On Tuesday last we had a heavyish gale of wind from the N. E.; and on that and the following day there was a considerable reduction of temperature, the thermometer standing early in the morning at 37° instead of 57° to 59°, as it did in the end of September, and at mid-day at

48° and 49° instead of 61° to 64°. To-day we had 54° in the morning and 61° at noon. Since my arrival in the month of April the only dangerous gale on the coast has been that of the 24th of September.

On Tuesday evening Mr. L. returned, bringing with him our lately arrived countryman, whose appearance makes me hope to find him an agreeable acquisition. He seems to travel for the excitement of adventure, as his interest in the cause of the country—though, of course, considerable, otherwise he could not have incurred the danger of visiting it, seeing he, too, was chased, and by *four* Russian vessels —cannot, as yet, be so intense as that of Mr. L. and myself. I hope we shall find some relief in the greater buoyancy of his spirits. His reception in the south, where he landed viz.; at Agûïa*, was by no means encouraging; for the people in that neighbourhood could not comprehend the object of his visit as explained by him, and pertinaciously insisted, in spite of a letter of introduction he had from a Turkish gentleman, that he must either be an English ambassador or Russian spy. They even went so far as to intimate their determination to detain him, until they wrote about him to Constantinople. Nor could they be convinced that the powder and lead this gentleman had brought with him, for the purpose of presenting to persons from whom he might receive civilities, were not sent by him as presents from the

* Query—if this be the Achaïa vetus of Major Rennel's map?

governments of England or Turkey. Upon Mr. L. arriving, and finding him in such a dilemma, it was agreed that our countryman had better assume the ambassadorial character thus forced upon him, for which the circumstance of the news of the king's death having been brought by him, in some sort paved the way. An address was therefore drawn up in Turkish announcing this (for the Circassians) truly melancholy intelligence, and informing them of the consequent and inevitable postponement of the consideration of their cause in England, owing to the temporary suspension and reorganization of the government; at the same time assuring them of the unabated interest felt in their welfare by Daûd Bey, from whom they might expect to hear in due time. A congress of some seven or eight hundred was assembled, at which our countryman appeared in the costume of the Royal Edinburgh Archers, and the address having been read, it appeared to give general satisfaction. No further objection was made to Mr. ——'s proceeding on his way, and he received some pressing invitations from the chiefs in the neighbourhood to pay them visits, which, however, temporary indisposition, his desire to proceed northward, and a sense of what was due to himself, in consequence of his first equivocal reception, induced him to decline. As to his powder and lead, it was deemed inexpedient to combat further the conviction of the people that they had been sent for division among them. The congress was therefore permitted to take its own way in this respect, and the portion allotted by it to this province was all that Mr. —— brought away with him.

Saturday, 7th. — Two Russian deserters and a prisoner, taken from Williamineff's army, have been here, and they inform us that the Emperor and his son, on their way to Tiflis, have been at Ghelenjík, where they arrived in a steamer, and remained only two days. They were there on Tuesday last during the gale; and, during their stay, a circumstance occurred which cannot, I think, but have results for this campaign favourable to the Circassians. Almost the whole of the biscuits and provender provided for the soldiers and cattle during the winter have been burned. How the fire originated we cannot learn; but the soldiers say, that the general belief among their comrades was, that Williamineff himself had caused the biscuits to be burned, to prevent the Emperor seeing how his soldiers were cheated, by being furnished with bread mouldy and full of worms, and of which only half the just quantity per man was served out to them. These men say further, that the treatment of the soldiers of this army is so abominable, that they had resolved, if the Emperor asked them any questions, to have cried out with one voice against it; but no such opportunity was afforded them. The fire caught also the house in which the Emperor was lodged; and, when the soldiers were endeavouring to extinguish it, his majesty said to them, "Never mind, my dear friends, it is my misfortune." Kind words and short commons! He and his sons did not sleep again on shore! They set sail for Redût-kaleh, and thence proceed to Tiflis. I presume they will return by Vladi-Kaukass, well escorted.

Immediately after the fire, Williamineff and his army marched out of Ghelenjík, for the purpose, it is said, of recrossing the Kûban, according to orders from the Emperor. They are said to be at present in Abûn.

When the news of the Russians having left Ghelenjík reached this, some youths of the neighbourhood, to the number of six, made a party to go and have a shot at them. They returned on the evening of the same day, bearing the body of one of their number, a youth of eighteen years of age, who had just been married! His father is a remarkably brave man.

No provender has this year been laid in for the cattle of the forts of Abûn and Nicolaëfski; and the speculation of the Circassians thereon is, that they are to be abandoned on account of the difficulty of provisioning them during winter.

Friday, 13*th*.—Information has been received, that the Russian army has left Abûn and recrossed the Kûban. It is to be hoped, and I think partly expected, that it will not be enabled to make good the loss of provision it has suffered so as to attempt another inroad before winter; and during that season I conceive it impossible for hostilities to be carried on to any extent, owing to the impracticability of the roads for artillery. Such being the probabilities with regard to war, we are increasing our endeavours to preserve the country in its present condition (until we hear further from England) by the prosecution of spies and other traitors. The effects already produced are, the detection and punishment of eight of

these wretches; and as the excitement is now considerable, and some hundreds are aiding in this salutary work, I think the evil will receive a timely check. The houses of the culprits have been burned and themselves exiled; their live stock and other effects divided among those who came to share; and their families are to be "bought in" by the fraternities to which they belonged. The people of Shapsuk, too, have put an end to the Russian project of a trading mart on the Kûban, near Abûn.

The provinces on the Kûban to the east of Shapsuk; viz. Psadûg, Hatukwoi, Temigui, &c. are at present in a painful predicament—the natural fruits of their exposed situation and their temporising policy. Their chiefs were lately invited into the Russian territory on pretext of a conference or some such plea, and then told they must stay to meet the Emperor and express their allegiance to him. This they refused to do as they had never become subjects of Russia, but had only made mutual engagements with her not to make war against each other, or violate their respective frontiers; and Russian troops have not been permitted to occupy these provinces, or have any footing in them. To their remonstrances and demands to be allowed to return home, the only reply made by the commandant of the fortress of Yekaterinodar was, that he had been ordered to detain them. Their removal further into Russia was then talked of, and it began to be feared that they were about to receive the same treatment that the chiefs of Kabarda, &c. had undergone some years since, when they were similarly invited into

Russia, where they have been detained ever since as hostages for the tranquillity of their provinces! The chiefs in question, therefore, resorted to a ruse; three of their number made their escape and roused up the people to make a violent clamour about their dread of being attacked by the Abazaks, because their chiefs were in Russia to meet the Emperor. Upon this the chiefs renewed their remonstrances against detention, but the only reply yet given by the commandant is that he must act according to his orders. The objects of this gross and palpable treachery are so evident as not to require any elucidation; but I hope we shall be able to turn it to good account against the Russians, not only in the belligerent provinces, but in those also whose chiefs have been now betrayed, who must disown any act or convention wrung from these leaders under such compulsion.

Innumerable instances of individual bravery and heroism might be here collected, of these there is no want; although there is no appearance of a principle of combination by which greater and more permanent results might be produced. I should not give you the following instance, but that the greater part of the transaction was witnessed by several people who happened to be on the banks of the Kûban at the time; and that is an example of a desperate love of liberty, general among Circassians, of whom very few ever allow themselves to be made prisoners. A young man of Shapsuk, after killing or wounding several Russians in a late affair across the Kûban, was made prisoner and carried to Yekaterinodar.

There he was questioned about, and frankly told, all the acts of hostility he had been of late concerned in, pointing out two of the soldiers he had wounded. He was threatened with death, fettered and thrown into a dungeon. But during the night he contrived to free himself from his irons, and to dig a hole through his prison wall, by which he got into the enclosure. This was surrounded by a wall and chevaux-de-frise, which he surmounted by grasping the points of iron in his hands and thus making a footing, from which he leaped down upon the outer ground. Here he was encountered by two sentries; but snatching up a billet of wood that fortunately lay at hand, he felled one of the soldiers to the ground with it, escaped from the other, and ran towards the Kûban. On the way, three Cossacks attacked him, whom he kept at bay with his billet until he reached the river and plunged into it. His trials were not yet at an end, for some soldiers put off in a small boat in pursuit of him, nor would his diving have, in all probability, saved him, had he not succeeded in upsetting the boat. At length he reached the shore, but finding himself in Psadûg—the people of which have made terms with the Russians—he was so fearful they would capture and deliver him up, that he set off in the state of nakedness, to which he had been reduced in his scuffles, towards his home, which he succeeded in reaching in safety.

I think it possible it may be supposed in England, that as only two provinces of Circassia are in actual and declared warfare against Russia, some of the

others, especially those on the frontier to the east of Shapsuk, may in some sort be subdued and possessed by that power. No such thing! the whole of Circassia is at this moment *de facto* free and independent of Russia; and in a condition to establish what government it pleases, and make treaties with what states it thinks proper. It has no Russian governor established within its territory; no ukase or Russian edict is even attempted to be published to the people. Excepting along the military road by Vladi-Kaukass to Georgia (which bristles with forts, and for the protection on which Russia pays an annual tribute to the neighbouring tribes) no portion of Circassia can be traversed by a Russian, and even on that road a considerable escort of soldiery and cannon is indispensable. Notwhatsh and Shapsuk are the two provinces which at present carry on the war, partially assisted by the powerful province of Abazak; but the only difference between these and the other frontier provinces is, that the latter have thought fit to enter into terms of mutual forbearance with the Russians; in short Russia possesses not one foot of the soil of Circassia, except what she has obtained by force, erected forts upon, and continues to hold by virtue of her artillery, beyond the range of which none of her subjects dare venture except for hostile purposes. Let her be dared to the proof that any of these statements is untrue, and then will the effrontery and falsehood with which she seeks to dupe Europe with regard to her possession of this country be exposed.

Monday, 23rd.—I have just learned an incident

which goes far to prove what I mentioned on the twenty-eighth of last month as likely to be the general effects of the abandonment of the question of the Vixen. Mr. —— says, when he was at Vona on his way here, his Dragoman, a Polish Tatar, and ardent friend of the English, was in a coffee-house, where sundry Turks assembled were informing one another that the Russians had taken an English vessel on the Circassian coast, and England had not dared to seek reparation; when the Dragoman, a man of more spirit than veracity, started up and declared it was false, as the English had in revenge captured three very large Russian ships and carried them, crews, cargoes and all, to England; expressing at the same time his surprise at the ignorance of these people in regard of this piece of intelligence.

My countrymen having pledged themselves to join in the first regular enterprise against the Russians, whilst I have thought proper not to do so, I feared losing in the estimation of the Circassians, (although their elders had suggested to me the expediency of my not adopting a belligerent character,) and am not ill pleased to find a compensatory character grown up for me, which originated in my quasi-medical practice, and search for fossils, plants, &c.; but which has reached maturity, through my predicting the eclipse of the moon on the 13th, intelligence of which was sent about in different directions, accompanied by an exhortation to the people not to consider it as an unfavourable omen, which they would inevitably otherwise have done, in compliance with a belief general among Mussulmans. Although I have told

Shamuz and others that such fore-knowledge is acquired by calculation; yet, as this passes their comprehension, they found it more consistent with their ideas to invest me with supernatural powers—the first-fruits of which were thus exemplified. In the midst of a forest, which occupies the centre of this valley, is a very large mound or barrow of huge stones, conceived to be the tomb of some mighty chieftain of old, especially as the stones are said not to be of this part of the country. Some months since we were taken to see this tomb, and expressed great desire to have it opened; but we found tools, men, and inclination, all wanting; and were told, moreover, a wondrous story of a former attempt on a small scale—which we saw had been made—when the men who were at work were terrified by strange and fearful sounds, and by one of them having his head turned round. In short, a Jin, or returned soul, was supposed to have its haunt there, and to attack those who dared to violate its dwelling. We therefore gave up the matter as hopeless, and should possibly have thought no more of it, had not the Circassians —emboldened, no doubt, by the result of my prediction of the eclipse—informed us they had made up a party to make another attempt upon the tomb, provided I would promise to be present. I did so; and a party of thirty or forty men assembled on the first day, and before I could get down two messengers had come to hasten my arrival. The scene which presented itself would have made a good subject for painting. The forest waved above us with a strong wind, which moaned among the half-leafless trees,

and added to the *eeriness* of the scene; the workmen performed their labour in the silence of expectation, which was shared in by the spectators, who crowded round the edges of the excavation, and only intermitted their anxious gaze downwards by an occasional glance at the expression of my face when any piece of bone, great stone, slab, or trace of structure, gave expectation of the feared retreat of the Jin, or of the locality of the hoped-for treasure. A group of smokers sat apart, beside a blazing fire among the tangled underwood and trunks of great fallen trees, and near them, tied to the branches, snorted our impatient horses. Directions were demanded of me as to where the opening should be made, and my opinion asked as to whether treasure might be expected to be found. Of this I gave no hope, as I had none; but said perhaps some ancient arms might be discovered. I presume, however, they imagined my magic-experience not to be great as to treasure-troving; for, notwithstanding my discouraging prognostications, they worked for three days, and became so hardy, through my assurances and their own experience, that there was no danger, as to do without my presence on the third. The mound was excavated to its very base; but all the reward it yielded was a nest of ground-squirrels (exceedingly fat), a snake, some bones, and fragments of vases of red pottery. The skins of the former I have preserved among my collection of Circassian animals—chiefly birds.

Monday, 23rd.—At this season, and for about a fortnight, is celebrated a very ancient festival, called

Merem. Troops of young folks go from house to house in succession, and spend the night in dancing, singing, and regaling with bozè, &c. Part of the ceremony consists in some of the company holding cakes, with cheese in them, which they wave about, while all shout out an invocation to Merem, begging her always to send them health, plenty, and happiness. It is in disuse in the north of Notwhatsh, excepting hereabouts; but prevails to the south, and to the east. The Circassians here say it was instituted at the time Christianity prevailed in this country, in honour of the mother of Jesus!

A Shapsuk man who has been to Psadûg, and was requested to bring news, has arrived here, and brings intelligence of the release of the chiefs who were enticed across the Russian lines. There were about 150 of them, and they have been detained nearly a month to meet the Emperor. Williamineff, on his arrival at Yekaterinodar, used every argument to reconcile them to the trick that had been played upon them, but in vain. Prince Pshûgûï, who was the principal spokesman, in reply observed, that to meet the Emperor was not the object for which they had been invited, and that they were not prepared for it in any way. Williamineff said he would send for any horses, clothes, &c.; but the prince remained firm in his demand that they should be released, saying, it was certainly in the power of the General and his army to detain so small a party by force, but if he did so he should find cause to repent of it. The liberation of the chiefs was the consequence; but whether caused by the General's fear of provoking

war in their provinces by their further detention; of their doggedness and intractability forming a spectacle but little gratifying to his Majesty, or of the exposure of such malpractices to us meddling Englishmen, it were hard to discover. One thing is clear; that it has been judged inexpedient at present to follow up with the chiefs in question the treachery and cruelty their countrymen of Kabarda formerly experienced; another, that the good opinion of the Emperor is no object of their ambition.

I cannot help here remarking upon the different effects the expectation of England's interfering has produced in different parts of this country. Where we now are it has caused suspension of action, because it is here thought, that a word from England will save and render needless all further effusions of blood; while to the eastward — judging from our conversations with chiefs from the Abazaks and the Prince of Psadûg; by the letter from Hatukwoi, and still more by the result of this affair of the chiefs of the provinces nearest the Kûban—it is evident that the people think the moment is at hand when they may beneficially throw off the degrading mask of neutrality, and join their countrymen in the maintenance of their common independence. I have not a doubt that to this feeling is to be attributed the firmness of the chiefs and the relenting of the Russians; because the latter must know as well as we, that the provinces they call friendly are in the state of a charged cloud, which has the moment of its explosion determined exclusively by the state of the atmosphere which surrounds it.

My countrymen, when in the south, received corroboration of the report we had formerly heard, of General Rosen having been obliged to reship from Ardler his Georgian and Azra auxiliaries, in consequence of their refractoriness in not firing upon the Circassians. They found it also true, that the Georgians had previously sent messengers to the Circassians to state that they had been compelled to join the army, but would fire in the air. Thus it may be hoped, that in Georgia also there still exists a *parva scintilla* of independence.

On the road between Tshopsin and Ghelenjík, my friends found proof—in the innumerable shot-holes in trees, in recent graves, and otherwise—that the Russians had there been roughly handled during their retreat.

My Pole has been on an errand, and is quite delighted with the improved treatment he now experiences, as attached to the English party. At the house where he dined he had ten tables served him, the best guest-bed, and the greatest civility. He begs to have more of such employment.

I have just had two specimens of rock brought me from a hill near the Adûghûm, which are evidently volcanic. They resemble pumice-stone.

LETTER XII.

VISITS AMONG THE TOKAVS—SALT-SPRING—PITCH-SPRING—SUPERABUNDANCE OF CIRCASSIAN FEASTS—THE PLAIN OF THE KUBAN—RUSSIAN NEWS—RENEGADE CIRCASSIANS—CIRCASSIAN OSTENTATION—CIRCASSIAN MINSTRELSY—FUNERAL FEASTS.

VALLEY OF PSEBEBSI, *Wednesday, 1st November*, 1837.

MY DEAR ——. We are here at the hamlet of Haûd-okû Mensûr—of the noble and influential fraternity Tshûpako—the head war-chief of this province. While I write, the rest are practising at a mark with their fire-arms. We left Semez on Saturday last; and put up, the first night, at the house of a worthy *tokav*,* within a few miles of Anapa. In addition to our large party (nine including servants) and escort, two cart-loads of females arrived the same evening; yet all appeared welcome, and the granary was thrown open for the benefit of all our horses. In crossing the valley, we came within cannon-range of the outer Russian fort, and saw Circassian piquets much nearer to it; but the only novelties I remarked during this ride, were numerous furrowings of wild hogs—which are said to be in great plenty in the neighbouring forests—and some wild pheasants, which we flushed.

* A Tatar term: equivalent to the Circassian thfokotl, and more euphonious.

On the second evening, we put up at a cluster of hamlets called Khopessa, seated on the brow of a hill, which affords a view of the whole of the Russian establishments around Anapa,—of the sea, and the distant hills of the Crimea.

On Monday, we had not long set out for the valley whence I write, before a brisk cannonade was heard in our rear. Some Circassians who arrived soon after informed us, there had been an encounter brought on by a sortie of the Russians, for the purpose of cutting wood in a forest just below where we had lodged. In this they were opposed, and obliged to abandon their design, in consequence of an attack by some 150 Circassians, (our informants among the rest,) who further stated that a young man who had been with us at breakfast had fallen in the action.

At this hamlet, I met a curious instance of the credulity of the people here in regard to the inventive powers of Europeans. On my inquiring how some vitrified lumps I found on the ground had been produced, they replied, "That it was a substance with which the Russians had last year burnt a cottage that stood there." It was probably occasioned by the alkali of a plant which formed part of the thatch.

We were quartered on Monday evening with Aretin, an Armenian (the atalik of Mensûr's son), who resides in a very picturesque portion of the upper part of this valley. Here we saw for the first time an upper story, or rather cockloft, to which access was obtained by some rickety wooden stairs.

The apartments of all the other houses we have yet seen are *au rez de chaussée*.

Mensûr gave us a hearty reception, and expressed his regret that he had not been able to see us frequently, on account of the state of his foot. To endeavour to heal it was one of the objects of our visit: and the case does not appear hopeless, although the wound is of twenty years' standing; for the management with dressings of herbs has evidently been bad. The wound was received in the course of an incursion he made during winter into the Russian territory in company with thirty or forty others. They were returning with considerable booty when they were attacked by superior numbers, and forced to abandon it. But Mensûr and ten of his companions determined to return and make another attempt, when they were again attacked, and all killed but himself and one friend, whom Mensûr carried off on his shoulders, dangerously wounded, until he sunk down exhausted amidst a snow-storm, accompanied by wind and such an intense cold as he has never since experienced. This snow-storm lasted seven or eight days, and during the whole of that time he lay on the ground without sustenance of any sort. When he was found by some Circassian hunters life was nearly extinct; and on removing him from the spot where he lay, a portion of his naked and frost-bitten foot adhered to the ice, and was thus torn off. All the toes and fore part of the foot are gone, and a large wound remains on the sole—a consequence of the impatient and restless spirit of this veteran chief, who is now and has been

for some time past one of the main props of the war in a large portion of this province. His mind we found the reverse of dejected, teeming with plans for carrying on the war with vigour during the winter, so soon as his foot should enable him again to get into the saddle. Aided by his experience and clear judgment, we soon decided upon the operations in which we could co-operate with most advantage to the country. Among these are the administration of an oath (which shall be mentioned hereafter), and a journey into the northern parts of Abazak, in which Mensûr promises, if possible, to accompany us.

No "womankind" is to be found within the hamlet of this chief. His wife is dead. Last year he lost between forty and fifty serfs by the plague; and two females he purchased this year have also died. But far from abandoning himself to despair, he has resolved (although about sixty years of age) on marrying again, and for that purpose he begged that the English pistol we had given him might be exchanged for a bow, which forms an indispensable ingredient among the articles generally given for a wife.

Sûmaï, Saturday, 4th.—On Wednesday afternoon we moved with a large escort to the second valley, eastward of Psebebsi, called Waps, and were hospitably entertained at the hamlet of four tokav brothers, whose numerous cottages are most picturesquely situated on a stream, amid thickly-wooded hills. Next day, on our way thither, we were moved to the hamlet of another wealthy tokav in the valley which lies immediately to the west of that of Mensûr,

where we were again treated with a lavish kindness, of which our host had previously given a more decided proof in entertaining at his hamlet about a hundred and thirty individuals of the vicinity who assembled for the purpose of taking an oath not to hold intercourse with the Russians, to detect and punish spies, and to do their utmost to suppress theft in their neighbourhood.

Learning there was a salt spring close by this house, we got some of the water and found that seventy-five ounces of it yielded one ounce of very good salt; but the water of a brook that runs by seems to filter into the head of the spring, and I have no doubt that were it properly fenced and excavated the brine would be found much stronger and very abundant. It is said that a spring of mineral pitch exists in this neighbourhood, and is used for smearing cart-wheels, &c. The deposit of salt in this part of the country must be considerable, for this is only one of many springs that have been mentioned to us.

We found our host here on the eve of setting out for Tshopsin with four sheep, millet, honey, &c., as his contribution towards the funeral feast of a relative who had been killed during the late invasion.

Here a case of powder was inadvertently given to a noble and a tokav for the purpose of being shared between them; when the former politely declined his portion, and afterwards informed my servant apart that he had done so because to share a present with a tokav was inconsistent with the dignity of his rank.

I have just learnt some further particulars about

the fraternities, and these, as well as other pieces of information of the same sort, must be taken as I get them; because it might prove prejudicial (by exciting suspicion) if I set too systematically about collecting and booking matters connected with the usages of the country. Besides, such a mode of proceeding might be the means of eliciting answers coloured to serve a purpose. I must therefore continue trusting to the current of conversation.

If a man be killed in a quarrel (the cause of most murders) by a member of his own fraternity, a calculation is made of how much would fall to the share of his family in the case of the murderer having belonged to another fraternity, which had been obliged in consequence to pay 200 oxen; and this proportion only falls to be paid to the family. In some fraternities if one member kill another *accidentally*, half of the above-mentioned proportion falls to be paid; while in others there is no payment at all. Duels are treated as murders, unless permission to fight be obtained from the fraternities of both the combatants.

Shamuz remained behind at Semez to construct a stable to hold our numerous horses during the winter; and he would, it is said, have joined us by this time, but that he has been obliged to go to Pshat to pay a visit of condolence to the Indar-okû family, in consequence of the death of a son of Noghaï (a very amiable youth) by a gun-shot wound from the Russians. Great stress appears to be laid upon such visits.

In a song we have heard here on the beautiful sister of the Zazi-okûs, one of her deserted lovers—

among the numerous reproaches he addresses to her —calls her as touchy as English gunpowder. I would gladly make a large collection of Circassian songs, as such records often afford the best illustration of the state of a society such as this. But I find great difficulty in getting the reciters to exert the patience requisite for making translations. The following fragment is all I could get on the present occasion.

"Without hesitation you must rush into battle, sabre in hand. He who takes spoil in war is a hero. He who falls in battle becomes a martyr; and he who is not killed will hear his praises resounded.

"They tied their bridles together; and, forming a square, thus they fought. The black war-horse of Khûz Ali, though staggering with fatigue, bore his master from amid the enemy. Achmet, the chief of the Zûsh fraternity, has brought with him the head of a mighty captain. Osman, the brother of Achmet, drove his steed against the steed of an enemy, and struck down the *Moscov* with his sabre," &c. &c.

Our hosts both of yesterday and to-day are tokavs, and to-morrow we go another short ride to the hamlet of a third, the object of the chiefs appearing to be, that, in travelling about, as we are now doing, for the purpose of exciting the people to hold a large congress at which measures may be taken to suppress treachery and Russian trading, and to redeem their character from the national reproach of thieving which attaches to it, we should for a

time be entirely among the tokavs, to prevent any jealousy on their part, which might have arisen had we continued visiting the nobles alone.

Upper Psebebsi, Tuesday, 7th November.—We are here in a still more picturesque portion of this valley, an amphitheatre of well-wooded rocky hills, some of which are conical, the rest of various forms, with a few fertile meadows between them, through which the clear and excellent fishing-stream Psebebsi travels over its stony bed. The hamlets are numerous, and the people equally kind and inquisitive. Still among the tokavs we find little or no difference, either in our tables or general treatment, excepting that the bedding is neither of such handsome stuffs, nor generally so cleanly, as among their superiors; but, on the whole, even in these respects, there is little to complain of. Excepting Mensûr, there are no nobles in this neighbourhood, and none between this and Adughûm. The Zahn (Sefir Bey's) family was, till of late, the superior of this part of the country, and its supremacy extended from Anapa to Adughûm.

The weather is still beautiful and mild. We had hoar frost for a few mornings; but that has disappeared, and at noon the sunshine is oppressively warm when not counteracted by the lively breeze from the east, which prevails during the day here as on the coast.

Mr —— (or Nadir Bey, as he is now styled here) went yesterday to look at the foot of our patient Mensûr, and found it progressing admirably, and himself consequently in high spirits, and ready to

give anything he possessed in recompense, offering my servant, who accompanied the *Bey*, the best of his horses, &c., which of course were declined. He spoke highly of Prince Pshûgûï, and said, that during his late visit he promised to give him a wife, and a female serf. Mensûr sent his son-in-law to report upon the former; but the report was not sufficiently favourable to induce him to accept of her. He prefers, therefore, selecting and paying for one of superior charms. Personal beauty seems to be, in general, the first consideration, and good housewifery the second. I presume there are few, if any, others.

Adughûm, Saturday, 11th November.—Our ride of Wednesday did not exceed an hour, but was extremely pleasing. Advancing up the valley of the Psebebsi, the scenery becomes more interesting from the wooded and fantastically formed hills closing in upon the little clear stream; they then expand, and form a very pretty valley called Shesh, where we found tidy, comfortable quarters, and good entertainment, from some tokav brothers, whose guest-house was very ornamentally enclosed and substantially constructed. The hills hereabouts appear to be chiefly a conglomerate of sea-shells and sand, forming a pretty hard stone. From Shesh we crossed the hill diagonally so as to come within four or five miles of the plain of the Kûban, and at this distance from it traversed several small valleys, among which I recognised only the names of the Psiff and Godowhaï, as tributaries of that river. The only valley which struck me as remarkable for fertility, size, and beauty, was the latter. Of our first quarters at Sufu

I must take notice, for two reasons. The first is, that our host gave the first example I have met with in this country of a positive disinclination to receive us. On learning this, we three English immediately remounted our horses, and declared our determination rather to bivouac upon the hills, than occupy a house against the owner's will. This movement brought our sulky host to his senses, and alarmed him at the prospect of the disgrace that would light on him if strangers were repelled from his door. He pulled one of us from his horse with great alacrity, and insisted upon all remaining, whilst his people bustled actively in putting the house in order. In the course of the evening, it was explained, that the elderly gentleman, who is a very wealthy tokav, had a two-fold cause for his sulkiness—that he had got only a few hours', instead of a day or two's notice —as he said the Vorks did—of our coming; and that he had travelled some time in our company, and been to see us several times at Semez, without receiving any present! He appeared, however, heartily ashamed of the extremity to which his bad humour had led him; and endeavoured to obliterate the effects by good cheer and kindly deportment. We, on our part—not disposed to be resentful—met his advances good-humoredly, and by this means, and by caressing a fine boy he has, so far gained his heart, (a present being added,) that we parted to all appearance the best friends imaginable. And it seemed to be well for our host that the other extremity had not taken place, as Luca, in the course of the evening, had been to a neighbour's house, where the judge

(Mehmet Effendi) and several of our escort were lodged, and making merry; who declared it to have been their determination, if this host had allowed us to depart, to have burned his house—Lynch law.

The other reason for remarking upon this place is, that we were here shown the spring of mineral-pitch I formerly mentioned, which is contiguous to it.—This pitch had the colour of petroleum, but may, perhaps, be naphtha, coloured by exposure, as I thought I saw on stirring the spring. I had some of it brought to our house; a wick made, and set fire to, which seemed to be a new discovery to those present, as our host seized the wick, and bore it off with no little alacrity to his house to show it burning to his wife. A conglomerate of sea-shells was the only stone I found near this spring. There are said to be some other springs of the same kind in this part of the country.

Adughûm, 30th.—The hamlet in which we are lodged is the third, in this rich and populous neighbourhood, we have been received at and heartily entertained, without any previous notice; and, as there are, as I said, nine of ourselves and servants, besides a numerous escort—some of whom always eat with us—the preparation of our repast must, in their small establishments, be a matter of no little labour. At dinner each day, we have been burdened with the variety of dishes, each of which must, to avoid offence, be at least tasted of. Yesterday evening we were to have been quartered upon an Armenian family, and were already on our way, when a man who had been sent before returned at full speed,

saying, that the quarters were occupied by a party from Psadûg. Great irritation was expressed at this conduct of the Armenians, it appearing to be expected that they should have turned out their visiters to make room for us; and some little demur and debate occurred in the field where we stopped, as to where we were to be lodged—for it was already near sunset, and consequently little time remained for search—when a tokav of our party offered, of his own accord, to receive us, so back we rode to his hamlet, and have had the usual plentiful repast. His appearance betokens poverty of both corporeal and mental endowments; yet his modest demeanour prepossessed us in his favour. Last night, when all had left us, he came in, and spoke to the following effect:—"My father was much esteemed, had always influence, and was much listened to in the councils; but I am one little considered, and cannot hope to imitate my father in anything but his hospitality. I should be sorry to shut the door which he always kept open, for, in entertaining strangers I seem to revive the days of my father. I hope, therefore, that you will prove my friendship for you by living with me every time you return to this neighbourhood."

After he had retired, Kaplan (tiger) Karzek, a noble of this neighbourhood (whose dark, expressive, and handsome features, would make him a fine "study" for an Italian bandit), and three or four others, arrived, to talk over a small expedition against the enemy which one of my countrymen had suggested, and which these Circassians were quite ready to execute along with him. But Kaplan afforded us

an instance both of the konak* system and of the influence possessed by the elderly chiefs, by saying that he and his party were quite ready to act, but that some of those who had come with us from the west had objected to the present execution of the project, lest it might displease Shamuz, who is at present responsible for all that may befall us, and that therefore the consent of Shamuz must first be obtained, and word sent him, when he and his band should be ready to start instantaneously.

Adughûm, 14th.—Yesterday we were received at this, the Armenian hamlet owned by three rich brothers, whose family has been established in this country from time immemorial. Our entertainment, as if to compensate for the former *contretemps*, has been most abundant; and it is arranged that we shall remain here two or three days, whilst the summons to the Congress is circulated. To-day my two countrymen set out to reconnoitre the fort of Abûn, distant two or three hours' riding, while I, who had seen it before, preferred exploring the country towards the Kûban: and I am now sitting in no little anxiety about my companions and their escort; for on returning from my ride, five successive cannon reports were heard.

My friends are just returned all safe, therefore I may go on with my own story: theirs might have been a melancholy one, for they were a long way within cannon-range, and two balls passed close over their heads.

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* Bizim is the Circassian word for a host and protector.

A little way beyond this hamlet I found the dense forest by which it is surrounded terminate. To the thick wood succeeded clumps of trees, interspersed with rich fields and hamlets. A ride of an hour and a half brought us beyond all these, and having crossed by a bridge of fascines, which the Russians constructed last year, a river called the Nwagatshi, and which is said to be formed of the waters of the Adughûm, Abûn, and Sheps, we arrived on the verge of a plain totally level, with a few scattered thickets, the rest being a vast green prairie, bounded by a distant and continuous skirting of wood, which indicated the course of the Kûban. This plain is all habitable, and apparently of surpassing richness, thistles and other annuals rising considerably above our heads while on horseback. The wooded parts display no timber of such a size as might be expected on this deep alluvial soil; from which circumstance I would infer that the Noghaïs, who are said to have possessed this part of the country previously to the Circassians, must have cleared away the forest, and that many years cannot have elapsed since it was allowed to resume its empire. Innumerable furrowings showed the multitudes of wild boars which now, with deer and other wild animals, are the only inhabitants of this portion of the rich plain which yet seems capable of supporting in ease and plenty some millions of human beings.

On our way, I had some discourse with the Prince of Janat, who has just returned from Psadûg, where the most trustworthy accounts of the Russian movements are generally to be obtained. According to

his statements, there is little chance of the Russians returning here this season, as they are fatigued with the campaign, and in despondency at its results. They have, he says, been marched into winter-quarters, at a distance from the Kûban. Many large detachments of fresh troops have been moved off suddenly towards the north, from which it is presumed that there has arisen some pressing occasion for their services. This may possibly have been caused by the edict lately issued by the Emperor for clothing the Cossacks as Hûlans. Since this will oblige them to abandon their ancient national garb, to which they are said to be fondly attached, the ukase in question may have created great discontent. It is thus that Russia, by assimilating everything to her own national institutions, and by making a "Procrustes bed" of the will of her Emperor, haply digs her own grave, and arrays against her the national feeling of every people she conquers.

Adughûm, 17*th*.—While at the Armenian hamlet on Tuesday last, I was informed that a man present had brought there two horse-loads of salt, from the Russian trading mart opposite Shapsuk, which I am sorry to say is again in operation. I of course let him know our feelings on the subject, and in the evening, when my countrymen had arrived, a neighbour came to us to say that if we would issue the order, the salt should immediately be seized and confiscated. This we declined doing, but sent for Mehmet Effendi to desire that, if possible, this delinquent might be immediately punished. He expressed his

wish that this should be done, but requested time to consider of it; and next morning he told us that, having consulted with the elders of our escort, they thought it would be premature, and would have a bad effect to pounce thus upon one of the many individuals of Shapsuk, who are equally guilty; and that it would be better to wait the general effects of the measures, which it was one chief object of our visit here to induce the people of that province to take, for the prevention of all such trading. In this we were obliged, somewhat reluctantly, to acquiesce.

We had an appointment for next day, with a large party, to go hunting deer and wild boars, on the uninhabited part of the plain; but the morning proved rainy, and it was moreover hinted, that a rencounter with some renegade Circassians might take place. These Circassians are nobles of Shapsuk, of a high grade, one of whom had his house burned, goods confiscated, and himself banished from the country, in consequence of his having received and entertained a Russian officer from Anapa. His friends say he was no traitor, and that he committed merely an error of judgment in thus requiting attentions he had formerly received from the officer; and his fraternity felt so enraged at his punishment, that the whole of them left the country, and have settled on an island in the Kûban. Some further misunderstanding having occurred between them and their neighbours on this side of the river, a rencounter took place that very day on the plain—where the former came occasionally to hunt—in which one of the nobles was wounded, taken prisoner, and subse-

quently stabbed; and three others also were killed. It would certainly be desirable that a reconciliation should take place between that fraternity and their countrymen; but the next best thing is that they should be deadly foes, to prevent the former from acting as negotiators for the Russians.

We were now asked what should be done in consequence of a chief of Psadûg having seized and detained two Circassians and an Armenian, of Notwhatsh, who had gone into their district to trade. We advised that a messenger should be sent to demand the cause of their detention, before any hostile measures—such as our consulters seemed inclined to take—were adopted; but if Psadûg cannot be weaned from her pernicious neutrality, it would not be amiss that there were a feud with her also, for her territory is, as matters stand, the workshop of treachery, and all are becoming suspected who go much there.

On Tuesday afternoon we moved to the hamlet of the "Beau Nash" of Circassia. "Sir Pertinax Vaunt" might perhaps better describe Kalabat-okû Katukwoi, for such another unwearied egotist is rarely to be met with. But the general economy of his guest-house and its tables are certainly unrivalled in this country, and, on the present occasion, the first visit of our lately arrived countryman, they seemed to surpass our former experience of them. Yet our greatest treat was the company of the lion of Circassia, Hadji Ghuz Beg, whom we met on the way, accompanied by a single servant leading a spare war-horse. We all dismounted to return this courtesy of the old warrior, who is suffering indisposition from a

fall *with* his horse, during his late fight at Tshopsin, and still more, it is said, from the Russians having been allowed to quit the country without more rough handling. But something may yet be done against them if the present combinations with this chief hold good. Little time sufficed for the discussion of these, and the remainder of the afternoon and the following morning which we spent in his company, were devoted to the merriment he seems to love. In the evening he brought a Circassian Ossian to us; an old blind minstrel, who has composed, and sings to his own accompaniment on the violin, most of the war-songs now in vogue. Of many of these he gave us long specimens; my greatest amusement during their performance, was to observe the fixed attention of Ghuz Beg, who loves music ardently, and who, having taken both first and second part in several songs, told us that as he, a Hadji, had sung, it could be no shame for us to do so. He insisted, therefore, that we should give him some specimens of our national music, which we did to the best of our power (our national anthem among others), and he and the rest of the party got gradually so elated, that sundry pistols were discharged up the chimney (nay—to the dismay of Sir Pertinax—old Beg fired one through the finely-planed boarding of the roof). By way of a climax to the general enthusiasm, a bevy of curious damsels assembled around the house and peeped cautiously in at the window of the room in which we were.

One song of the old minstrel seemed to be an enumeration of all the duties incumbent on the Cir-

cassians at the present crisis; others were satirical, and produced much merriment. We paid the old poet a tribute of praise for the good he confers on his countrymen in exciting their patriotism, and added more substantial proof of our admiration in a present. On his part he promised to make our benevolence to his country the theme of a song, and thus we parted for the present. Here is a specimen of the old man's minstrelsy :—

WAR SONG.

"When the Russian general arrived at the fortress of Shad, they called a council. The council was moved on to Ferzadi. They passed the Lûbiz, dyeing the river with their blood, and then erected the fort of Abûn. The yellow-haired general is arrived: what does he deserve? 'A great battle,' said the Circassians. Kazi-okû Pshemaff, thy heart was like mount Saberkwesh, but thou hast fallen headless on the field; the gate of Paradise is open for thee, and thou hast entered it immediately. With his foot he guided his lion-horse in battle, and when fallen they covered him with his coat of mail. Tehûghi Dovlat Mirza, immaturely brave, fell a martyr on the field. The garments of Hadswaff-okû Sûbesh were yellow; and, like a blaho, (serpent,) he strove to sting the Moscov. The men of Shapsuk gazed from the mountain side; but the men of Notwhatsh rushed, sabre in hand, into the battle, and were slain. Jambolet, at night, kept guard, and, in the day, swept the field like a destroying flame. Haûd-okû Mensûr, when mounted, was all bravery; but, in the council, all wisdom. Of thee be it said, Indar-okû Noghaï,

that though advanced in years, thine appearance and deeds are those of a brave and stout young man. Kûsht Tegûmi Zad, of thee be it said, that though thy features be aged thou hast merited a year's praise. Kalabat-okû Hatukwoi, vain of himself and of his steed, drew his sabre and entered into the battle. Kûshmûd (his brother) drew his sabre, and the breast of his red steed soon opened for him a pathway amid the ranks. Young men of Circassia, rush forth to the battle, for brave youths always love war. If ye fall ye become martyrs, and if ye survive ye have half that glory!"

On Thursday morning betimes, the Hadji, who lodged in the second guest-house, beat up our quarters, and during the discussion of an excellent breakfast a liquor call shûen (something like treacle beer, yet less palatable and much stronger) was circulated so rapidly by our persevering host, that the Hadji (though he did not drink much, nor most) got highly elevated and as full of fun and tricks as a boy; and it was not a little amusing to contemplate in this phase the scourge of the Russian frontier, upon whose head a price is set; whom the Russian soldiers imagine to be a mighty prince inhabiting a fort, and having numerous retainers in his pay; and whose name is made a bugbear by the Russian mothers. The name acquired by his deeds is all his "bulwark and his tower of strength."

We set out early, having to meet a large assembly of people convened on the occasion of a funeral repast some miles off, to deliberate with them on the

subject of the administration of the national oath (as it may well be called) in Shapsuk. But we had only passed the first enclosure when the war-cry and the firing of some pistols made us turn to defend our baggage and rear-guard, attacked in mock fight (as it proved) by the Hadji and a large party on foot; and this attack having been repelled, amid much merriment, and our advanced guard having entered some thickets, we were in like manner summoned to its defence against an ambuscade placed there in wait for it. Such amusement is frequently indulged in, and is excellent training for the horses at least.

The funeral meeting we found to be a very large one. It was held on the wide slope of a hill, where, exposed to a bleak foggy east-wind, we had to take our seats on mats under a leafless tree, while a small flickering fire burned at our feet, and helped to comfort us during the endurance of the long tedious delay that here, as well as elsewhere, seems always to be the penalty one pays for partaking of a dinner at which the guests are numerous. But on these funeral occasions there is least excuse for this, as the viands are always cold, almost always the same, and of little variety.

During the interval, however, there was some horse-racing and bow-firing at the remote centre of the large space we were assembled on; and early in the day our attention was attracted to one side by the report of a pistol, when five or six men rode rapidly off the ground and left another seated upon it with several around him, to whom parties immediately galloped up from all parts of the ground. Presently

a man passed up the hill supported, and apparently wounded. On inquiry, we learnt that the persons who had quarrelled were members of the same fraternity; that the one had sold a Russian prisoner or deserter to the other, and immediately after carried him off and resold him (as was supposed) to the Russians. Such being the case, instead of sympathy we felt regret that the wound had been but a slight one in the foot; and we have since urged Mehmet Effendi to have this traitor made an immediate example of, and to have this selling of prisoners punished with the same severity as espionage. He says it is to be one chief subject of debate at the approaching congress. So far as I can learn, the crime is new, and seems not yet to have been made the subject of legislation, without which there seems to be a wholesome disinclination to act.

After our repast, there was the usual proclamation upon the subject of the intended congress which is to be holden on the eastern frontier of Shapsuk, and to which the different fraternities are requested to send members. The ceremonies concluded with more horse-racing and bow-firing. The only remarkable events during these were, the claim urged by the second and third in the straight-race to a share in the prize of my winning jockey; and the surprise of the Circassians at the ease with which our new fox-hunting associate got away from their pursuit-race by leaping the fences—an exploit which seemed to cause new light to break in upon them; and there are already several young aspirants to the glory of performing this feat, though a somewhat hazardous

one with the Circassian saddle and its short stirrup-leathers. I might have added the circumstance, that in the competition of archers the mark was not once hit, but that it would have appeared more remarkable if it had been; for the feat must be exceedingly difficult. The mark is a small one, projected from the top of several lofty poles fastened together so as to raise it to a considerable height. Two horsemen, one before the other, put their horses to their speed, a short distance from the pole, during the approach to which the pursuer bent his bow, stooped to the left side of his horse, (the pole being on his right,) and thus twisted, with his face backwards, and then looking upwards from beneath his raised left arm, he let fly the shaft, which on several occasions ascended perpendicularly, and very near the mark.

LETTER XIII.

FEMALE EDUCATION — LADY VISITERS — COMFORTS OF RAMAZAN WHEN IT FALLS ABOUT THE WINTER SOLSTICE.

BOKHUNDÛR (SHAPSUK), 19*th November*, 1837.

WE are, at length, so far on our way to the long-talked-of congress. Yesterday we travelled some twenty miles, crossing the rich, level, and beautiful plain of the Abûn, about four miles to the north of the fortress—if barracks of wood, surrounded by an earthen rampart, with cannon, deserve the name. In the evening, amid a shower of rain, we reached the most wretched quarters we have occupied since we came to the north; and we found them the less endurable that we had been spoiled by the good treatment of our last host at Adughûm, Ali-bí—said to be the wealthiest man of the province, and possessed of property (land is never taken into calculation) to the value of 6000*l.*—in whose house our entertainment was amply indicative of affluence. His guest-house was large and commodious; his tables numerous and excellent; and not only ourselves but all our servants had mattresses and coverlets supplied them; —while here we are in a wretched little cabin, about twelve feet square, on three sides of which the clay has fallen from the wattles, and allows the wind free passage, bringing with it, on one side, the noisome vapours of the stables; and all the bedding furnished us were three mats, and as many cushions. The

excuse pleaded for all these deficiencies is the vicinity of the place to the usual track of the Russians; and it seems a valid one.

Kûtshûk, a handsome young Turk in Nadir Bey's service, having communicated to Luca his great wish to be enabled to marry a handsome Circassian girl he is enamoured of, and who speaks and writes Turkish well, I was pleased to learn, at the same time, that a great many girls are thus educated, attending for that purpose the schools in the mosks, along with the boys.

Another act of aggression has been committed by the people of Psadûg, who have carried off a thousand or two of sheep from the frontier of Abazak. This conduct is so utterly at variance with the statements of the prince, as to the general disposition of the people of that province—whom he represented as overawed by the Abazaks—that we are at a loss to guess its cause, and tempted to conjecture that it may have been the act of incendiaries set on by the Russians, to prevent the alliance they may have heard is about to be concluded between these two provinces. But we must wait for further information before moving in the affair.

Ankhur, 20*th*.—We have shared for the last few days in the great anxiety of Mehmet Effendi, regarding the getting together a congress, deprived as we are at the moment of the assistance of those most indispensable personages, Shamuz and Mensûr; in whose absence the people seem disinclined to meet; but we have now secured the co-operation of Shiplagokû Nassû, an elderly tokav, (the Demosthenes of

this province, but braver, if less eloquent, than his great prototype,) and of some other influential individuals. Matters being thus in train, the judge is in high spirits, and scorns the aid of Shamuz, to whom he has sent a reproachful message. The conduct of the latter in thus absenting himself upon an occasion of such moment appears very strange, to say the least of it, and, as I cannot doubt his fidelity to the interests of his country, the only feasible solution of it that I can imagine, is that he may have remained behind, to assist his relatives the Indar-okûs, to find a settlement in the valley of Semez; and that he thinks something due to his personal influence, and is unwilling to expose it again to the defeat he met with in his late attempt to raise a force to attack the Russians on their retreat. He will therefore probably make his appearance so soon as the assembly is past doubt.

Perhaps you might feel no regret had many of my rides been taken in as dense a fog as the hour's ride of this morning, as you might, in that case, have been spared so many tedious descriptions of scenery: yet I warn you they shall be persevered in, to serve as memoranda, so that if memory shall fail me, I may by them be enabled to cast up, hereafter, an account-total, descriptive of this country, which it is possible may not soon again be visited by Englishmen.

This morning the dense cold fog which prevailed till mid-day (it has frequently done so of late, as if brewing the strong frost we are about to have), veiled the landscape from us, and concentrated my attention on my benumbed toes. The "ways were mire;"

the forest which bordered the greater part of the road shed its surcharged moisture upon us; and, with an east wind in our faces, we were glad that our day's journey did not extend beyond the hour which brought us to the house of an elderly tokav, who received us most heartily; apologised for not having it in his power to entertain us as we deserved; and expressed the pleasure it would give him if we could remain with him a month.

Here we received the interesting intelligence that the Russians had engaged two persons to carry us off, kill us or our horses, or do us some grievous injury, for which they have promised a large reward, and given 2000 piastres as earnest. We have consequently been strongly advised to be prepared at all times, and not to stray from our escort.

22nd.—The evening before last, as we sat conversing with some visitors, a cry and some pistol shots were heard; all rushed out, and believing that a bride was being carried off, several pistols were fired in honour of the occasion; but it turned out a hoax of old Guz (or as it is properly pronounced Ghezil) Beg, who entered our house in the midst of the gathering he had caused, laughing heartily at the success of his joke. He staid with us till one in the morning; and the dancing of one boy, and the very good singing of others, (with which we had been entertained the previous evening also,) besides other music, and the improvising of the old chief, helped to pass the time. He seems entirely devoid of care, and enjoys the dance with the spirit which belongs to boyhood only. He came here to inform my

countrymen that he has got up "a gathering" for an exploit against the Russians; but they are obliged to defer taking part in any such matter, because we think the presence and influence of all three necessary here at present, for getting the projected measures (against the spies and Russian trading) framed and put in execution.

We have been honoured here with the visit of the four daughters of our host, who were all betrothed, but the Russians have just cut off the hope of the youngest.

There appears to be a strange incongruity between the stately and reserved deportment unmarried girls of this country generally exhibit in public, and the freedom with which the male acquaintances of a family may caress and be caressed by them; but a kiss would be considered an outrage of all decorum.

Shiplag-okû, on his first introduction, addressed us to this effect:—"Some may tell you that the country is about to be lost by spies and smugglers; but do not believe them, for we are as determined to resist as ever, and can, if necessary, carry on the war for as many more years as it has lasted. Others may reproach you for a difference of belief; but do not heed them, for we know of the friendship your country has always shown towards Turkey and the Circassians. We will, therefore, always look upon the English as brothers."

Khabl, 22nd.—Yesterday, another cold short ride of an hour and a half brought us to this small village or congregation of hamlets. Here November now reigns in all her native gloom. The forests of oak

which clothe the undulating country around are obscured, as are the skies, with one unbroken cloud; a raw Russian breeze chills the air, and occasional drops of rain moisten the ground: and while the elements thus combine to dishearten us, the tide of human affairs runs equally adverse; for reports of the treachery of some we thought the best friends of their country are current; and the hopes of a congress being assembled to take measures for stopping the contagion are apparently in the agonies of death, because the chief people of influence have not yet made their appearance. The only excitement existing is in the modicum of danger we incur here, where we are but a couple of hours' ride from that part of the Kûban where is the island inhabited by the Abbat fraternity, of whom I have spoken as having formerly abandoned this province, and who have since been joined by many bad subjects, who from time to time commit depredations upon the people of this neighbourhood. These people are supposed to have a commission from the Russians directed especially against us. It is but five nights since a party of them passed this house, driving off a booty of oxen. A demand for restitution has been made, accompanied by a threat of vengeance; and as it is expected the Russians may induce them to make an attempt upon us, we are advised to be prepared to give our visitors a suitable reception.

My countrymen tell me that in passing between Pshat and Ghelenjik they heard that, on the late march of the Russians on that route, a Circassian fell wounded in the leg, and his body was afterwards

found by his countrymen laid across a fire and half roasted. Whether or not this was the unprompted act of the soldiery, it speaks equally forcibly as to the hopes of civilisation to this country through the medium of Russia.

Upper Khabl, Monday, 27th.—The depession under which I wrote a few days ago was doubtless attributable to the approach of indisposition which detained me for three days at our last quarters, with a feverish attack—of which I rather wonder we have not had more, considering the great dampness of the ground and the close contact with it in which we sleep. Yesterday I followed my countrymen to this place, a ride of about an hour and a half, in a course nearly south, which brought me to some very picturesque hamlets at the termination of a branch of the plain, closed in by the commencement of the hill country, through which is a difficult and long gorge (formed partly by the river Khabl) that leads to the sea-coast at Jûbghe.

On my way, I observed a portion of what appeared to have been a very considerable entrenchment, and which my attendants reported to have been anciently a fortress.

I was glad to learn on my arrival here that while I was laid up things had taken a lively and favourable turn. Zepsh, one of our attendant elders, departed on Friday for Notwhatsh, to bring thence Mensûr, if possible, and all the people of influence of that province; others had departed for Abazak and other quarters, with the same object; viz.—that of assembling here a great and influential congress, that

execution may be done upon spies, and the oath I have already mentioned administered to all who have not yet taken it. The inhabitants of this district have demurred as to the oath, and forcible measures are to be adopted against them if necessary, to prevent the effects of their bad example. The old men of this neighbourhood (our host, a very wealthy merchant and brave warrior of about 100 years of age, among them) are all on fire with warlike projects, and press us to remain here during winter to co-operate in their execution.

On one of the nights of my illness, my companions were aroused by divers noises, well calculated, with our existing apprehensions, to excite alarm. The trampling of horses was first heard; to that succeeded the talking of men outside the house, then chopping of wood, and finally an attempt upon the door. Our fatal hour seemed arrived (though I was insensible to it); ideas of being shot, carried off, or burned in our cottage, were rapidly suggested and communicated; a determination to die hard was come to; and thus with pistols in hand they waited till the alarming sounds had passed off and sleep had again resumed her composing influence. When morning dawned the "Wolf" entered, and proved to have been, with his attendants, the cause of the disturbance. They had just returned from Psadûg, where Tûghûz having heard of the detention (by a Hadji too) of the three Notwhatsh merchants and their effects, he came into Shapsuk, assembled five-and-twenty men, and with their aid carried off from the hamlet of the offender a man and four oxen. He sent the Hadji

word thereafter, that he would make restitution when he released the Notwhatsh people and their goods: what the primary cause of this aggression was I have not yet learned. Tûghûz was said to have been concerned in the deportation of the 2000 sheep from Abazak, which he denies, though it is said four of his servants were, and that it was done as a punishment upon four of the principal chiefs of the province, who had voluntarily accepted the invitation to meet the Emperor on his return from Georgia. I trust severer measures may yet be taken with them; and I am glad to find that their selfish and traitorous visit to Russia, and the expense and trouble they were at in decking themselves in silver lace, coats of mail, &c., afforded them (as is probable) no compensation.

It is said the Emperor, when they and some other Circassians in attendance were pointed out to him, spoke to this effect:—"Are these people from the hostile provinces? Bid them keep at a distance." And still feeling some apprehension for the sacred lives of himself and son, he had the wit to express a desire to see a Circassian race, and on the Circassians starting off, in compliance with his request, he also started off in continuance of his journey, leaving the mountaineers, no doubt, in wonder at imperial manners, and in despair at their blasted hopes of presents. These, I believe, after all, might have been the only object of their visit. One, at least, of these chiefs is reckoned a stanch foe to Russia; and examples are to be found of many who have received presents, without any abatement of their hostility ensuing—so crude, as yet, are the Circassian notions of national duties.

His majesty's conduct in this instance seems not to have been very considerate, probably his temper, as at Warsaw, overcame his discretion, and prevented him concealing his mortification at finding that so few of his *loving Circassian subjects* were in attendance, and that a vast extent of country which he has for many years embodied in the charts of Russia, and passed off in Europe as subjected to his sway, is still almost as far from being 'de facto' an integral portion of his empire as ever.

The people of Psadûg—ranked I presume amongst Russia's *mirnoyé* or friends—who have thus done execution on these temporising Abazacks, say they will restore the sheep, if we Englishmen say they ought to do so.

A tragic scene had to all appearance nearly occurred previous to our leaving the district of the Khabl, in consequence of Shahan Gheri, a very brave, active, and handsome noble, having come to meet us there, and having thus encountered a son of Shamuz (whom his father had sent to join us), and a servant of the family, who is at present in Nadir Bey's retinue. These two had drawn their rifles immediately on seeing Shahan, but were prevented firing by the other members of our escort who were present, and who obliged them, moreover, to promise not to have recourse to extremities again, upon the understanding that the subject of quarrel between the two families* should form a subject of debate and adjustment forth-

* This, in all probability, was the cause of Shamuz having absented himself.

with. The nature of the feud is this :—Some twenty years since Shahan married the sister of Shamuz, who, with his wonted liberality, refrained from exacting the presents usually given on similar occasions; and she, after having lived with her husband for some five years, and born him several children, asked leave to pay a visit to her family. This is a common usage, and it frequently happens, that on the return of the wife, she brings with her presents of as great a value as those given to her family on her marriage. On this occasion, however, even the wife was not forthcoming; and she has ever since remained an inmate of her brother's house at Semez, where, I believe, she has become a devotee. Shahan repeatedly demanded restitution of his wife, and the other twice sent her from his house; but she returned, and was finally permitted to remain. Shamuz told Shahan, however, that he was ready to send her back to him, provided she were received into his house, and lived with conjugally. "No," replied Shahan; "she left me, and remained away without cause. I have since taken another wife; but send her to me, and she shall be provided apart with a house and establishment suitable to her rank." Matters remaining in this position, Shahan seized the opportunity of a servant of Shamuz being in this neighbourhood four years since to deprive him of his horse and arms, which he retained, in part compensation for the loss of his truant wife.

There is no want of competent authority to settle this and many such disputes, which keep families, and, what is worse, fraternities at variance, and constitute, in the present circumstances of the country,

one great cause of weakness: but procrastination seems to be a besetting sin of the Circassians.

This hamlet is charmingly situated on a wooded knoll, which has others flanking it, and from which we overlook rich meadows, intersected by the stream (Khabl) whose name (like those of other rivers in this country) forms the only designation for the surrounding district. High oak-clad hills close in, immediately to the south, and seem to admit of but a difficult and intricate passage in that direction.

The guest-house here is not, as usual, on the verge of the hamlet, but in the midst of our host's homestead, in the large green of which are several noble oaks. The scene would, I think, prove attractive to a clever sketcher, and form a good subject. In the centre he would place a small field-piece (the pride of our host's heart), mounted on an unwieldy carriage, fit for a gun of six times its calibre; then divers parties of warriors seated or standing about the green, in anxious or fierce debate (for blows have been exchanged and weapons drawn during our stay, — a broken nose, however, has been the usual result), on the important matters now about to be put in execution; groups of cows and buffaloes feeding from circular paniers fixed in the ground; horses, saddled or unsaddled, tied to all the trees; turkeys and other poultry roaming scaredly about their invaded domain; watch-dogs stalking sulkily around; while, between the family houses that skirt the enclosure, females, with their floating white veils, glide gracefully on their household errands, and present a strong contrast to the Russian slaves, lazily hewing wood and

bearing water. A huge fence of split trees, crossed, forms the enclosure, which is embosomed in woods, and through them appear the blue tops of the mountains to the south.

Of the slaves I have mentioned, there are six on this establishment—four Russians and two Greeks, who were wrecked and captured during the gale in the beginning of October. They came with stores from Sevastopol, and say that the Vixen is not yet sold, as the captors demand about 6000*l.* for her! She should be bought by the Emperor for the Imperial Museum!

Our host is, as I said, about one hundred years old, yet still hale and active. He is rich, both in live-stock and merchandise. His reception and entertainment of us, and his invitation to stay or return, are urgent and apparently sincere. He seems to appreciate warmly the motives of our visit to his country, and to anticipate great benefit from it. In this expectation we at length feel justified in participating, as the people here seem earnest to turn our presence to account.

Along with the other measures I have mentioned, has been combined one for putting an end to the usage, transmitted to the Circassians from their ancestors, of schooling their dexterity in war by stealing from each other. We have long declaimed against what remains of this, as a bar in the way of their national prosperity. It is nearly extinguished in the north of Notwhatsh and the west of this province, where the oath now under discussion was taken three years ago; and if the Shapsuk can now be

prevailed on to follow the example thus set and to abandon this pernicious habit, our stay in the country will not have been in vain, although no other good should result from it; since these two provinces will thus become, as the people themselves say, more firmly united than ever, and perhaps the good example may spread into the north of Abazak also. In the south it has already found footing.

Our host here is ludicrously enamoured of his gun (a three-pounder), and deplores the exhaustion of the stock of powder he always kept for it, thinking it the bulwark of defence for this valley. By his own account, he dreams of it constantly.

He says he found once in the channels of the Khabl a lump of lead ore which he put in the fire and melted, but he has not been able to find more. He supposes it to have been brought down the stream from the hills.

In some of those hills there are caverns, the external openings to which are extremely small; and our good old host gravely informed us that, in former times, it was said the inhabitants of these caverns were pigmies (or divs) who rode on hares*, wore chain-mail, and were armed with bows and arrows.

I am sorry to learn that the Dalziel of the Russians (General Sass) has returned to head-quarters. The women and children may therefore expect hostilities to be recommenced against them.

Amongst the other heterogeneous masses of which the Russian army is composed, are Tatars of Khazan,

* M. de Marigni heard accounts of this race at Pshat.

who of course desert to their co-religionists here whenever they can get an opportunity.

A secret which concerns us has just transpired. I believe I mentioned that at the first great congress held at Adughûm, part of the debate was rather stormy. Mr. L—— and I hearing that something was being asserted to the disparagement of Daûd Bey, repaired immediately to the spot for the purpose of confronting his accuser. But it now appears that ourselves were the subject of debate, in consequence of another letter from Sefir Bey (besides the one I mentioned as bespeaking a good reception for us), and which a dragoman whom Mr. U—— had turned off for some crime had got the Bey to allow him to write (in his name, and to authenticate with his seal); of course giving a false account of the contents, which he could easily do as he had contrived to gain the confidence of his master. This letter asserted that we visited the country without authority from any one, and should therefore be turned out of it as Russian spies; and the debate hinged on putting this recommendation into execution, for which Prince Pshemaff and some others voted. They were vehemently opposed however, and finally overcome, by Shamuz, Mensûr, and Ali-bí. We have also been told here that the above-mentioned dragoman, immediately on being turned out of Mr. U——'s service, proceeded to the Russian Chancellery. We may therefore presume the above trick to have been devised and paid for there.

Lower Azips, Friday, 2nd December.—On Monday we set out from the hamlet of our centenarian

host at Khabl, where previous to our departure about 100 persons were assembled. Almost all of them who had horses accompanied us; and the scene, as they galloped down from the height on which the hamlet is perched, and deployed on the valley, uttering their war-screams, and firing their pistols, had for us something exciting in it, as the semblance of a fight—the reality of which we seemed doomed to scare away.

A ride of an hour and a quarter over the wooded shoulders of a hill, whence we had an extensive view of the plain of the Kûban, brought us upon the very picturesque vale of the Azips, whose hills towards its source seemed clad with forests of greater growth than I have usually observed in this district, the population of which seems to have been sufficient to occupy, successively, every part of the country.

Here too we entered, for the first time, upon the territory of the enemy, that is, of those who have not yet taken the national oath, and we were warned, consequently, to be in readiness at all times, lest an attack should be made upon us, the present chief *apostles of reform*. Under these circumstances it seemed to me somewhat odd that we had been allowed to advance before our army; viz. a body of footmen who were to come from Khabl to burn the houses of those who may refuse to take the oath. But we have been now four days among these bad subjects, and still neither civil nor military proceedings are commenced, although there has been no lack of debating about them. The two hosts, to whose hospitality we have been entrusted, seem highly respect-

able persons, and have treated us very kindly; as for the enemy "non inventus est," for the men are said to have absconded from the recusant hamlets, and to have sent off this morning 100 carts to the trading mart for salt, which seems as if they expected to be obliged to forego the trade and wished to make provision beforehand. Mehmet Effendi and others of our Notwhatsh escort are in despair; but Shahan Gheri, who should best know his own province, appears confident of success, and says that we shall go forward to the frontier of Psadûg; endeavour to detach it also from trade with Russia, and "call upon it by their common faith to make common cause, in all respects, with these provinces." This chief appears a zealous friend of the independence of his country, and under the circumstances it is now placed in, it is certainly much to be regretted that more of those "born to command" are not here to aid him in his laudable endeavours. But the chief nobles of this province, excepting Ghuz Beg, are, as I have shown, irretrievably lost to it by their own folly.

At the last hamlet we put up at, the affair between Shahan Gheri and Shamuz was tried, and the former, who was present, was adjudged to pay thirteen oxen for having despoiled the servant of the latter. The feud may therefore be considered as at an end, and the sons of the parties have been already in the friendly intercourse best suited to their youth. But another matter connected with it may still be agitated; viz., the exaction from Shahan Gheri of the presents usually given on receiving a wife of the

grade of the sister of Shamuz, and on which it seems Indar-okû, the cousin of the latter, had insisted, for the honour of their fraternity. I think I have observed in other respects, that Indar-okû stickles for adherence to Circassian usages, while Kehri-kû seems disposed to introduce some of those of Turkey.

For the first time, I have eaten here boiled gourd, and find it very good with milk, and not unlike the sweet potato. It must be highly nutritive, from its sweetness and farinaceous qualities. But the days of feasting are over for a time; for we are now four days advanced in the fast of Ramazan, which we have determined to observe with the Circassians, so far as regards taking our meals by night; both to suit their convenience, and to avoid jarring their feelings; as we should be a grievous burden wherever we went, if the unfortunate females had to cook for us during day, and for their countrymen during night. Besides that, our remnants could not be passed, as they always are, to two or three subordinate classes, till nought remains to be carried back to the family house but the tables. It happens so far well that the days of this moon are of the shortest. The moment the sun sets half-a-dozen tables are brought, to stay our more instant calls of hunger: a second repast is served at nine o'clock, and a third at three in the morning; and fast as it is, Shahan Gheri told our host last night, that he must entertain us well, as he being a wealthy man can easily afford to do so, and ought to consider it an honour to have us for his guests. But this day-fasting has

been with us entirely optional, as Nassû, previously to its commencement, said to us, "We know from the Turks who come among us, that it is allowed to travellers into another country to suspend their fasts; and how much more allowable would it be for you to do so who have crossed fifty countries to visit this one?"—and that, if we wished them to cook for us during the day, we had only to say so.

In the sermon preached to-day at the mosk, the audience were prepared for the business of the ensuing week by an exposition of the nature and obligations of an oath, and of the necessity of punishing those who violated it.

LETTER XIV.

TAKING THE OATH—PARTICULARS OF THE SECESSION OF THE ABBATS—TAUSCH, THE RUSSIAN EMISSARY—THE TLEUSH, OR FRATERNITIES OF THE CIRCASSIANS—"A LOVE TALE."

KHABL, *3rd December*, 1837.

MY DEAR ——. On Saturday morning I rode towards the hills to see a sick man who had sent to request a visit from me; and having been joined by Mehmet Effendi, and others of our Notwhatsh friends, we halted on our way back on a green in front of a mosk, where a congress was about to be held. Some thirty persons were already on the ground, and a similar number arrived during my stay, which was short, as our presence had not been required. During this time, however, Shahan Gheri delivered a lively address, urgently pressing the immediate taking of the required oath, and declaring that he would rather shed his blood, than have the reflection attach to his province, that Englishmen who had come so far to aid them in the good work had been obliged to return without effecting anything. Some one having objected that more persons of influence were wanting from Notwhatsh; and that their position might become dangerous if the recusants should gather in force against them; "If we be honest in our intention," replied the enthusiastic Shahan, "there are enough here; more cannot be wanted, but for the purpose of burning the houses of

the evil-disposed; if they make head against us, I shall be the first to charge them."

Such was the *pleasing* intelligence I carried to my countrymen in the morning of the disposition of the people then assembled; but evening brought with it news of a darker shade. Subsequent to my departure, many more people arrived; the oath was again urgently pressed upon their attention, and it was recommended to them to treat us English hospitably, and to provide us better accommodation. Mutterings of dissent in regard to the oath were first uttered, and some individuals then waxing hotter, exclaimed, "Those Englishmen are the cause of that oath being forced upon us, and whoever receives them into his house, shall (according to a vulgar oath) have his mother dishonoured." Unluckily for these malcontents, Mûstafa, a tokav of Upper Azips, happened to be present. When lodging last week at his house we had been all struck first by his blunt demeanour, next by the quiet determination of his aspect, and lastly by his love of a joke. He treated us with kindness and liberal hospitality, and before we left his house he gave signs of having formed an attachment to us which now showed itself. No sooner had these traders or traitors uttered their invectives against us than Mûstafa exclaimed, "I received these English, and they are true friends of the country;" and, without further exordium, he drew his sabre, and rushed towards them. Some friends interposed, and persuaded him to give up his sword, which he did, substituting for it a big oak stave, with which he felled

three to the ground, from which they were carried off pretty severely hurt. Others soon joined in the affray on both sides; but our friends proved much the strongest, although none of those from Notwhatsh took part; and it is certainly to the credit of the people that, although all were, as usual, armed, and the question a most important one, no deadly weapon was made use of. Sundry pistols were discharged, but this I presume was merely by way of heightening the relish *of the row*.

Such indisposition having been shown by these people to entertain us further, Shahan Gheri declared that we should make his house our own, and remain there as long as we pleased. He forthwith sent a messenger to say so to us, promising that our horses (which consume hay to an extent that must be onerous to individuals) at all events should be abundantly fed, and it would go hard if he did not find wherewith to entertain ourselves also, though not he feared in proportion to our deserts. Gratified by this cordial invitation, we immediately packed up, not ill-pleased, moreover, to quit a house which seemed literally ready to tumble about our ears; a landlord, who although he gave us sufficiency to eat, neither spoke nor looked a welcome, and the savage habit of making bed-fellows of our pistols every night. A newly-invented species of halter for stealing horses, which one of our servants here brought in to show us, convinced us moreover that this host must be adverse to that clause of the oath at least which strikes at that ancient national usage.

Our sole escort on removing were Yedig (a relative

of Shahan Gheri), and the eldest son of Shamuz; but our retrograde journey did not exceed an hour and a half, chiefly through open forest in the plain: pushing on quickly, we reached the hamlet in which we now are a little after sunset. Though the host was, and still is, absent about the important affair now in hand, we found everything in comfortable readiness for our reception, in a guest-house, as neatly constructed and well furnished as any almost we have seen. Our horses also seem likely to find the promise of good treatment kept; and a stable, which holds them all, has been constructed expressly for them.

We despatched Osman by daybreak this morning to learn what was going forward at the place of congress, previously to our sending him to endeavour to bring forward some of our friends from Notwhatsh. He has just returned, and he reports that affairs wear now a more promising aspect, and that hopes of success by peaceable means are again entertained. But he adds that Mûstafa was again there, mounted on his black charger, and bearing, in addition to all his arms, a goodly sapling, for the purpose of persuading recusants, and gainsaying any who might again venture to traduce the English. His only words are, "The oath must and shall be taken." We are quite disposed to echo them, and to aid in influencing the adoption of strong measures if necessary; for it is said, if these malignants of Azips were overcome, the swearing in of the remainder of the province (of which there remain only four rivers or districts out of nine) will be comparatively easy work. What, among other things, we seek to put

an end to, is not only illicit trade, but systematic seduction, by the instrumentality of that traitor Circassian noble—degraded into a Russian Colonel—who gives salt partly as a gratuity, and at an under rate, to those who bring wood and provisions to his quarters, and doubtless pours poison into their ears at the same time.

4th.—Late last evening Shahan Gheri, Mehmet Effendi, and sundry others, arrived from the oath-meeting, and were in high spirits, especially the judge, who crowed with triumph; and we so far responded, because all our late doubts and anxieties were relieved by the news they brought us of the people having at length come forward and made a tolerable beginning in taking the oath. Fifty had been sworn in the course of the day, confessing at the same time the crimes of which they had been guilty or had knowledge. Mehmet Effendi entertained us with a few specimens, embracing thefts of cattle and horses from their countrymen (chiefly of Notwhatsh), and traitorous communications with the General of the enemy. A messenger from Notwhatsh also arrived, bringing word that the people of that province who were to have come with us have set out to aid us.

As this business is now likely to reach a successful termination, it may not be amiss to explain its nature more fully. It was originated about thirty years since by Kalabat-okû of the Tshûpako fraternity—a chief of whose integrity, sagacity, energy, and courage, all speak in terms of the highest admiration. Considerable progress in the measure was made at

that period, but time had weakened the effect of what had been done. The three days' visit and expostulations of Mr. Urquhart served to revive the undertaking; and I doubt much if such an instance of influence obtained over a people by one individual, under such circumstances, and in so short a time, could be paralleled. The oath is to this effect:—"The jurant undertakes to remain true to his country, to hold no communication by trade, or in any other manner, with its enemies the Russians; and to denounce those who do, and assist in their condemnation and punishment; to abandon entirely the habit of stealing from his countrymen, and to inform against those who continue to do so, and to assist in their condemnation and punishment. He binds himself, further, to make unreserved confession in regard to all acts at variance with these engagements in which he has participated, or which have come to his knowledge in time past."

Mr. Urquhart was at Semez and at Hokkoï in the month of July 1834, and in the following month the administration of the oath was, through the influence of his recommendations, commenced at this very locality (Khabl), under the direction of a large body of the Notwhatsh chiefs; and was enforced from house to house (not without bloodshed) as far as Pshat. From that time nothing further was done, or even I believe attempted, until our arrival. In like manner on the coast to the south, where theft and feud pervaded the land, nothing of this kind was done to arrest their progress until the arrival of Mr.—— (Nadir Bey), when all the neighbouring districts were

summoned to send deputies to a congress, to be holden in the valley of Agûïa, where he then resided. About a thousand persons assembled; and, in the three days during which they remained in congress, all the feuds between their fraternities and families—some of them of many years' standing—were finally compounded. The deputies, some of whom were from Abazak, swore for their respective districts an oath somewhat similar in purport to the one administered to individuals here. It was agreed, moreover, to raise by subscription a fund, out of which rewards should be given them for the discovery of treachery. The chiefs of the south told Mr. —— that his presence there had been of inestimable benefit, in enabling them to get carried into execution that valuable measure, which henceforth, they said, would bind them all in a general bond of brotherhood.

These instances may serve to prove the great desire there is among the well-disposed people of this country (who form a great majority) to introduce order and good government, and to obtain for their country, for these purposes, some general and supreme authority. It is this makes them grasp at such shadows of it as we are. At present, according to what we are told, we have been held like a rod *in terrorem* over the heads of the recusants here, who must be subdued, because they stand in the way of their well-disposed countrymen, for Kalabat-okû (son of the chief of that name I have just mentioned), who may be depended upon, and who asked leave to quit us for a few days, has just returned from the frontier of Psadûg, bringing the agreeable report of what our

young countrymen called, in fox-hunting phraseology, "a holla ahead;" viz., that though at fault here, the people towards the east end of the province are all demanding eagerly to have the oath administered among them; and they send word that if the people of this district refuse to take it, they will come and burn their houses. There appears, however, to be no danger of miscarriage now, for so many have already taken the oath, that the judge, it is said, has a house crammed with the articles given in payment of the fines. One case that has been told us may serve to show the light in which this affair is viewed by a portion at least of the people. An individual who had taken the oath was called upon to declare, like the rest, what crimes he had of late been guilty of. He replied, he had none to make confession of, and was allowed to depart. Next morning, however, he made his appearance, bearing as a peace-offering to the judge five or six measures of grain and a large basket of honeycomb, and stated that the devil (some good angel I rather think) had terrified him all night for the falsehood he had told, in concealing his crimes, of which he then made a frank confession. The consciences of others, however, are not so tender, or at least take a different direction, and lead them to boggle about binding their future conduct; but for these persons, Mûstafa is still in attendance, brandishing his cudgel in one hand, and pointing to the suspended Koran with the other, with a circle drawn around him, within which—a second Prospero with his magic book and wand—he calls to him the evil spirits and conjures them into obedience.

5th.—Zepsh has just returned from his mission to Notwhatsh, and reports that a number of the elders of that province will immediately set out to join us here. Mensûr's foot, he says, is all healed but a bit about the size of one's finger. During the last twenty years it has never been so well as at present, and he expects its entire cure in about ten days, and his delight and gratitude are said to be extreme. This, if true, will indeed be a gratification, and must, from the universal estimation Mensûr is held in, win us many friends.

Zepsh reports that a day's fighting has taken place with the Russian wood-cutters on the hills above the vale of Anapa, where we lodged, on our way here. There was no great loss on either side, and the only thing remarkable was an interpreter, on the part of the Russians, asking why they were interrupted in cutting down that wood, since they had bought it of the owner! The judge, overhearing this, says, if it be true, that individual may say his prayers, as his days are numbered. The Russians, by this and some other incidents, show that they still reckon upon a disjointed anti-national state of affairs, which I am glad to say is rapidly passing away. In a similar manner, when they had forced the Turks to cede Anapa and Sûjûk-Kaleh, they demanded from the Circassians permission to pass from Anapa to the latter place for the purpose of taking possession, which the Circassians of course refused, adding that they would do all in their power to oppose them.

7th.—One of the few nobles of this province called

on us the other evening, but, understanding that he had been to the mart for salt, we gave him a cold reception. He repeated his visit, however, and told us, that he came for the purpose of informing us that he had some Russian prisoners whom he wished to exchange for Circassians, and that he was anxious to give us this notice of his intention and purpose for going to the Russian frontier, lest we might think he had any treachery in view.

There was a marriage in this neighbourhood a few evenings ago, to which our two young Poles begged leave to go, expecting some amusement; but they soon returned, and reported that no dancing was allowed on account of the prevailing fast. Among Mussulmans, the original meaning of the word fast is still regarded; and, from sunrise to sunset, all but sick folks and children observe the strictest abstinence, not even wetting their lips with a drop of water. But the smokers, the eternal smokers, have most of my pity and interest, in seeing them, so soon as the slow-paced sun is fairly set, rushing with their pipes to the fire, like the pilgrims of the desert to a fountain. It is pity of those who carry watches in these days, for they are in incessant requisition, especially towards evening.

Our warm-hearted host here seems earnest in his endeavours at reconciliation with his brother-in-law; his son has presented his cousin with a rifle, and the servant, who with the latter was about to take vengeance on him, has been despatched to Semez, to present to his master a horse said to be the most valuable in the two provinces.

Tuesday, 12*th*.—For some weeks past the weather has been in general foggy and cold, and the wind from the east. Yesterday, however, winter showed himself unequivocally; it snowed during the day, covering the ground to the depth of nearly a foot; and, towards evening, an arch of clear sky in the north, and two large flights of wild geese, told the approach of a frosty wind from that quarter, which came accordingly, and with such effect that ink in a bottle under my pillow was quite frozen, as was water this morning on our floor, within four feet of the immense fire, which burns night and day.

Being here amid the ancient possessions of the members of the Abbat fraternity, we have been endeavouring to learn the truth regarding that dark episode in the history of this province—their expulsion. But the task is difficult, as it is evident that many of the tokavs view this incident as a triumph of their class; while our other informants, the nobles, consider the treatment of the Abbats as cruel and unjust, and date from that period the loss of a large portion of the consideration and influence they formerly enjoyed. This fraternity consists of about eight families, who are of almost princely rank; were exceedingly wealthy, and had numerous retainers and slaves. They are acknowledged to have been among the bravest of their countrymen and always foremost in battle, as was the case in a great action that took place on the plain of Anapa, previously to the surrender of that fortress; where the Circassians mustered in great force for its relief, and

were led to a desperate charge against the Russians by the Abbats with their crimson standard.

One of the immediate causes of their exile dates so far back as the period now spoken of, the ultimate cession of Anapa to the Russians by the Turks. Immediately after this, the Circassians sent an embassy to the Porte, consisting of Besni (the chief and most influential of the Abbats), Hatukwoï of Ghelenjík, and Tshorat-okû Hamuz, a tokav of whom I have spoken. Besni is said to have been a person of great mental capacity, who took a lead in all the affairs of the province, and who, as well as the other members of the fraternity, always showed great conduct and courage in war. As senior member of the mission to the Porte, and still more as of much higher rank than even Hatukwoï, precedence was, according to the usages of his country, his undoubted right, and not disputed by the other. Hamuz, however, thought proper to make it the subject of a violent quarrel, arguing for Mussulman equality; and forgetful of the intimate friendship, which had for years prevailed between them, he conceived a deadly hatred against Besni for having asserted his right of precedence, and consequently received the chief presents bestowed by the Turks on the occasion. The object of the mission was to obtain the countenance and aid of the Porte against Russia; and this having failed, Hamuz insinuated that the failure was attributable to the disparagement thrown by Besni upon his countrymen in his conversations with the Turks; while Hatukwoï, on being applied to, professed ignorance of any such disparagement having been

uttered. In this doubtful position the question remained until about four years and a half ago, when a brother of Besni, on some of his slaves escaping into Russia, applied to the Russian authorities to have them restored; which being granted, he went by appointment into the fortress of Anapa to obtain restitution. As a return for this service, he was requested to receive a visit in his province from M. de Marigny's interpreter, Tausch (called by the Circassians Carlo, formerly a politico-mercantile emissary, and now a major in the Russian service), and another person, said to have been an officer of engineers. With this extraordinary request—whether through easiness of disposition or treachery—he unfortunately complied.

These spies he took across the country to Pshat, (on which occasion it is supposed the localities of the forts of Abûn and Nicolaëfski were fixed on,) and kept them for some days in his hamlet. The people of the neighbourhood immediately rose *en masse* to take vengeance on the traitor; his fraternity assembled for his defence, insisting that he should be regularly tried; and thus the two parties stood confronting each other, when word was secretly conveyed to the Abbats that preparations were being made to surround and destroy them. In consequence of this, four families made their escape across the Kûban to the island, where they have since remained; two fled to Besni; and one has been allowed to remain in Abazak. The wife of Besni, by some accident, fell into the hands of the now deadly enemy of her huband, Hamuz; while the greater portion of

the very numerous serfs, cattle, and flocks of the fraternity fell a prey to its opponents. Besni soon planned and effected the recapture of his wife; and they had nearly arrived at the Kûban, when they fell into the hands of some of the hostile party, who brought them back prisoners. Besni now loudly demanded that the innocent should not be confounded with the guilty; that he should be tried by his countrymen formally; and if found guilty, he declared himself willing to submit to death or any other punishment. One judge interposed in his favour, for which he and his family have since been obliged to remove to Turkey; and so excited were the people that they persisted in involving Besni in the guilt of his brother, although it is acknowledged that he was absent from their hamlet when the Russians were received there. But he and his wife were saved from destruction by Noghaï of Abûn-bashi, a very enterprising-looking tokav, who secretly made his way by night into the house where Hamuz had confined his prisoners; broke Besni's chains (for he was chained by his old friend), and carried both into Notwhatsh; most of the chiefs of which province with whom we have conversed upon this melancholy affair, condemn the conduct of the people of Shapsuk. A party of the latter subsequently attempted to punish Noghaï; but he was defended by his fraternity. With the Notwhatsh chiefs Besni and his wife for some months found protection; but this appearing likely to produce a feud between the two provinces, the protecting chiefs conveyed them, by way of Abazak, into Psadûg,

whence they regained the island to which others of the fraternity had fled.

Many individuals in this province, and still more in Notwhatsh, appearing convinced of the injustice of making the rest of the fraternity suffer for the crime of an individual; and all being obliged to admit that, up to the period of that crime, no fraternity in Circassia stood in higher estimation for patriotism and courage, I cannot help thinking that the affair might have been arranged upon some broader basis of justice, had not Hamuz and others of his class desired the degradation and expulsion of these nobles, for the purpose, apparently, of increasing their own influence: and the diabolical spirit that, in part at least, actuated Hamuz is proved by his having taken opportunity of the wife of Besni being in his power to violate her person. This being viewed (as it is in connexion with the disparity of rank of the parties) as an almost indelible affront, constitutes one of the greatest items of grievance the Abbats suffer under; for in a debate that took place at the time in Notwhatsh upon the affair in general, it was agreed that until this affront was redressed, it would be derogatory of the dignity of these nobles to return among their countrymen; and thus has a wound, which might soon have been healed at first had it received a vigorous, skilful, and just treatment, now become apparently an incurable political gangrene, which seems to render necessary the complete amputation of a valuable member of this social body; for the injuries that have since been inflicted on both sides are such as to destroy all hope of true reconciliation.

Hamuz, from opulence, has been reduced to a medium condition by forays upon his large stock of horses and cattle; other successful forays have been made by the Abbats; and, what is infinitely worse, some of them are said to have been with the Russians during their last year's invasion. On the other hand, the people of this province have, in addition to the injuries at first inflicted on the Abbats, ever since treated those on the island as their most deadly enemies, and are at present planning their extermination. Subsequently also to the attack I have spoken of upon a party of them who were hunting on this bank of the Kûban, a Shapsuk man made his way into the house, where one of them lay a wounded prisoner, and drawing a dagger from his sleeve he stabbed the Abbat twice with it and escaped—a trait of treacherous cruelty, as the narrator said, quite foreign to the Circassian character.

The above seems to be the most consistent account of this affair; others however are given, as for instance, that the Abbats were not compelled to fly for their lives, but that they voluntarily left the province on account of the insult perpetrated against Besni's wife; while, in regard to this, it is said that she, as well as Hamuz, declared her readiness to swear that no such insult was offered. He affirms he can otherwise prove this, and that he circulated the report to the contrary only for the purpose of widening the breach.

Since coming into this province I have learned that the Circassian who soon after my arrival at Semez caused such urgent application to be made to me for

my procuring his restitution among his countrymen upon any terms they chose to prescribe, was one of these unfortunate Abbats. I learn that four others, in like manner, then desired my interference. I earnestly hope means may yet be found for rescuing the members of this fraternity who may be found innocent from their present deplorable condition; but great difficulty attends the interference of strangers in an affair in which the passions of a multitude have been so fearfully excited.

Associating with these Abbats, and inhabiting the same neighbourhood, are fifteen families of nobles, also of high grade, constituting the fraternity of Janat. A prince of that name has lately gone there also. This fraternity, for what reason I have as yet been unable to discover, emigrated some years since from the west of Shapsuk to Psadûg, and has only of late moved into its present critical position, which hostile measure seems to imply that it also has grievances to retaliate on the people of this province. But these modern Coriolani must not be permitted to seek redress through the ruin of their country.

Having spoken of Tausch, I may give you a slight sketch of his history, as it affords some insight of the serpent path of *Russian* conquest.

Tausch is an Austrian subject (and thus a traitor to the interests of his native country). During the essay (made at the recommendation of the Duc de Richelieu, and on *his* part perhaps sincerely) of gaining the friendship of the Circassians by trading with them, Tausch made his first appearance in Circassia as a merchant, and displayed such extra-

ordinary liberality in his dealings and courtesy in his intercourse, that he made friends wherever he went. He was thus enabled during many years to visit most of the northern part of Circassia, and to acquire the language perfectly. His *quasi*-mercantile projects were of course put an end to on the outbreak of the present war in 1829. Shortly thereafter he succeeded in seducing the Abbat, as above mentioned, to escort him and the engineer along the very route which General Williamineff and his army afterwards pursued. Tausch accompanied him also, as he has accompanied the invading armies of every subsequent year. He is generally the chief spokesman when any of his former acquaintance make their appearance at Russian head-quarters for exchange of prisoners, or such other affairs; and, in order probably to give him importance in the eyes of these people, he now appears in the insignia and grade of a Russian major. The Circassians call him Carlo; and I have heard some few speak of him even yet as if they believed him still their friend.

14*th*.—The administration of the oath goes briskly on; but it seems likely to be a business of more time and labour than we at first anticipated. All, even serfs, from fifteen years upwards, are sworn, and every one who has committed theft has not only to make restitution, but is also fined six hundred piastres (nearly six pounds) for each delinquency, which fines constitute the fees of the judge and the other members of the commission.

It may well be conceived that those who have thus to regorge and be fined in addition, should show dis-

inclination, especially when it is recollected that the hereditary prejudice of the people was favourable to adroit theft ; yet Sûbesh (another of our escort), who has been to the eastern frontier of the province, and has just returned, confirms the report of the people in that direction being eager to have the oath administered to them, and the bad subjects among them thus brought under restraint. It is to be hoped, therefore, that when this large and peculiarly vicious neighbourhood is done with, the work will proceed rapidly and smoothly.

15*th*.—The Circassian word for the societies or fraternities is "tleûsh," which signifies also "seeds."* The tradition with regard to them is, that the members of each all sprang from the same stock or ancestry; and thus they may be considered as so many septs or clans, with this peculiarity—that, like seeds, all are considered equal. These cousins-german, or members of the same fraternity, are not only themselves interdicted from intermarrying, but their serfs too must wed with the serfs of another fraternity; and where, as is generally the case, many fraternities enter into one general bond, this law, in regard to marriage, must be observed by all. All who are thus bound together have the privilege of visiting the family-houses of each other on the footing of brothers, which seems to me only to make matters worse, unless they can all bring their minds to look upon the females of their fraternity as their very

* The phrase, however, in common use, on meeting a stranger, for instance, is to ask him to what "Ashish," or family, he belongs.

sisters, otherwise this privilege of *entrée* must be the source of many a hopeless or criminal passion.

We have here under our eyes a proof that such consequences must proceed from the prohibition. The confidential dependant or steward of our host here is a tokav who fled to his protection from Notwhatsh; because, having fallen in love with and married a woman of his own fraternity, he had become liable to punishment for this infraction of Circassian law. Yet his fraternity contained perhaps several thousand members. Formerly such a marriage was looked upon as incest, and punished by drowning; now a fine of two hundred oxen, and restitution of the wife to her parents, are only exacted. The breaches of this law therefore are not now uncommon.

LETTER XV.

A MAN WITHOUT A GUN — CIRCASSIAN PRAYER-MEETINGS — THE MRS. GLASS OF CIRCASSIA — MENSUR AND HIS WAR-STORIES — MOHAMMEDANS THE RADICALS OF CIRCASSIA — THE TWELVE CONFEDERATE PROVINCES OF CIRCASSIA — STRANGE CONDUCT OF SHAMUZ — MODES OF EMANCIPATING SERFS — DOUBTS AND DIFFICULTIES — HISTORY AND PRODUCTIONS OF SHAPSUK.

TSHIKAHUZ, 21*st December*, 1837.

MY DEAR ——.· A report of the relapse of our patient Mensûr having reached us at Khabl, it was resolved that one of us should visit and advise him about his foot and general health, and solicit in return advice about sundry affairs of state, he being by general consent admitted to be the first man in the provinces both for counsel and action. On this errand I set out on Friday the 15th, accompanied by Sûbash and three servants; but our progress on the first day was slow, for 15 degrees of thaw had made a marsh of the plain, and the Khabl having overflowed his banks, was to be met running at random over all the roads and pathways of the neighbouring forest; while the evident depth and strength of his main current, kept us skirting along his willowy bank in search of a ford, to which a hunter we met at length directed us.

This man was on foot, armed with a rifle, and attended by two dogs, somewhat like a cross between

our Highland colley and the greyhound. He was in search of hares, one of which was started, and all four were soon lost to us amid the woods, the man screaming to excite the dogs, and they, so far, holding their distance better than I expected.

After a three hours' ride we alighted at one of the hamlets of Bochundûr, because the country for a considerable distance on each side of the Abûn has been deserted since the establishment of the forts and the frequent passage of Russian armies with provisions for them; and if, as was supposed, that river was found unfordable, we should have been overtaken by night before we could reach a habitation in returning.

Having given away two guns I brought with me, and not having yet got another, I am, it would appear, like the wolf in the fable who lost his tail, an object of general wonder, which so soon as I had alighted here was thus expressed by a little boy:— "Who is that?" "A stranger." "But what kind of a man is he, for I never before saw a man on horseback without a gun?"

Here was a Mollah of a noble family, hired by our host to say prayers in his family during Ramazan. During this season wherever a Mollah lodges, all the males in the hamlet who say prayers assemble at sunset to say them along with him; and this scene on one or two occasions in our large room at Khabl was not a little impressive and picturesque. On one side was placed a man holding a blazing pine-wood torch. In a corner stood the oldest Mollah on his mat, alone, with his face to Mecca, while behind him

were ranged, diagonally, two dense rows of worshippers, among whom a younger Mollah acted as Muezzin, chanting as a prologue the usual call from the minaret, which was followed by the elder one, chanting, somewhat musically, the prayer-service, all kneeling and rising simultaneously with him.

The second night we put up at the hamlet of a wealthy tokav in Godowhaï. A small hill on one side of this beautiful little valley was shown me as the site of an ancient fortress; on reaching the summit I found it level, and encircled by what appeared the ruin of a stone rampart.

But this valley possesses another though more transient object of interest in the wife of my host, of whose fame, as the Mrs. Glass of Circassia, I had previously heard, and whose pastry, soup, and stew, amply justified it, and proved her worthy to cook for a Parisian. The tasteful furnishing of her guest-house; the tidiness of her husband's dress and equipments (so dependent here upon the activity of the wife, who is at once tailor, shoemaker, hatter, sempstress, and embroiderer); and above all her fame in gastronomy, made me curious to know something of her history, when I found that she had received her *education* in Anapa. But the cup of her husband is not without the usual drop of the gall of humanity; for severe and frequent headach is the penalty he suffers for indulgence in her luxurious feeding.

Soon after my arrival my Polish servant introduced to me a countryman of his, a lively strong young man; and next morning I was happy to learn

that my brave and hospitable host had just struck hands with him, promising him his freedom in two years, "because he is a Pole!" A Russian deserter from Anapa was here also shown me—a Narses in manhood if not in war, and I learned, with some satisfaction (seeing that the population of Russia is so misapplied), that the religious sect this man belongs to is numerous, there being many entire regiments of them, and in Anapa about 400. The object in deserting of this, and many such beings, is to be sent into Turkey, where they are very much respected, *or at least prized.* He, like the rest, hopes to reach Jerusalem, but he may perhaps have a less bright destiny, and, instead of viewing "the beautiful gate of the temple," end his days at the gate of a Harem!

I found the foot of our patient, Mensûr Bey, much as I had left it; perhaps a little better; and, if it had suffered a relapse after being better still, he had only himself to blame, for, during the first storm of winter which we had ten days ago, upon a report that mares he has feeding near the Kûban were missing, he had mounted his horse, and gone to look after them.

None but the poorest ever ride on mares, and of so little value are they accounted, that herds of them are left to roam at large, winter and summer, in the woods on the Kûban, and to find food and safety as they best can, for there are wolves also in the woods, and by them Mensûr's stock has latterly been much diminished.

He was at one time one of the richest men in the province; but the plague having swept off his wife,

and his numerous serfs, he became indifferent to the possession of property, and bestowed the greater part of what he had upon friends or followers in war.

The administration of the national oath, three years since, was originated by him; he expresses great satisfaction at its renewal, and, warrior as he is, says that it is a thousand times preferable to any war exploit that could be devised, and will preserve the country for many years to come. "While the soul is in my mouth," said he in the Turkish phrase, "this country shall never be ceded to Russia; when I die, they may do as they please." His energy, singleness of heart, and firmness of purpose, I think highly calculated to give effect to his determination.

While talking of the slow progress of the oath-congress, I happened to use as an argument for its being urged on, the possibility that the letter we expected by Mr. ———'s vessel, might make it indispensable for us all three to depart in her, which he construed into an intention to abandon them, and this immediately produced a breeze of excitement, in which he exclaimed, suiting the action to the words, "If England and Turkey abandon us, we shall burn our houses and property, cut off the heads of our women and children, and retire to the high rocks, and there defend ourselves till the last man fall!"

Among some of his old war-stories, he told me of an action that had taken place at Abûn three years since, when the Russians were on their way to commence the construction of the fort since established on that river. Their army amounted to 14,000 men, escorting many waggons of provisions and materials;

that of the Circassians under himself and Ghuzel Beg, did not exceed 700. They lay in ambush in a wood waiting for the passing of the Russians, and an animated debate being held on the mode of attack, the people of Shapsuk under Ghuzel Beg, (not himself I feel sure) voted for the use of their rifles, while Mensûr and his men said they must rush suddenly among the Russians with their sabres, and either achieve something or perish. This determination—desperate as it appears—was approved of, and acted upon by the majority, consisting chiefly of men of this province, aided by Ghuzel Beg, and a few of his Shapsuk men; while the rest, to the number of about 150, retired, and stood aloof to behold an act of what they perhaps deemed certain self-martyrdom. Such, however, it did not prove to the whole of the 500 who joined in the attack. About 150 were slain, and the rest—after some very severe fighting—actually succeeded in capturing, and bearing off, seven of the baggage waggons! The heroism and cowardice displayed on this occasion, are treated of in the song sent you.

He mentioned also a very successful foray he had made about the same time into Russia, at the head of 500 horse, and 400 footmen, when they almost entirely destroyed a body of cavalry sent against them; forced one of infantry to retire, and returned bearing off the entire spoil of nine villages, —men, women, and children, and several thousand head of cattle. But it must not be supposed that the Circassians monopolise this predatory warfare. Indeed, Klaproth says that the Russians have gene-

rally been the first aggressors, of which Mensûr now gave me an instance in a foray made into his neighbourhood, some fifteen years since, by a Russian general, (Vlassov, according to Marigny,) who, on account of his being bereft of his nose, the Circassians called 'Manca.'* He bore off a considerable booty, and among it the daughters of one of the Kalabatokûs (him of whom I have spoken), and whom Monsieur de Marigny erroneously styles, "Puissant Prince."

The success of this foray might be owing to its being totally unlooked for, because their ally the Sultan being then at peace with Russia, no invasion of her territory was permitted by the Circassians, and consequently none of theirs expected. Mensûr therefore undertook to go and demand an explanation of this conduct. Upon being ushered into the presence of the "epauletted general," as Mensûr calls him, he was asked who he was, and replied that he had come to learn why such an unprovoked attack had been made upon his countrymen. The general answered insolently, to the effect that he hated the Circassians, and wished to work their destruction. Upon this Mensûr grasped his sabre, and was about to make it speak for him, when the general hastily interposed, through his interpreter; "I only joked, my brave fellow;" and to Mensûr's threat, that unless he made his countrymen speedy and ample restitution he was but a lost man, he made a civil and soothing reply. In a short time thereafter ample

* Quere—If this word be of Genoese origin?

restitution was made of all the captives; and, so far as money can compensate, for those slain or wounded also. But no restitution was made to the provinces to the east of Shapsuk, though in them the forays of that general had been numerous and destructive; and it might be difficult to find, in the intricate web of Russian policy, the motive for the line of distinction here drawn, had not her acts in general afforded us the master-key to her foreign policy—"Divide et impera."

Manca was recalled from this frontier (or, as the Circassians think, banished), but his place has been more than filled by another freebooting general, Sass, one of those German renegades to civilisation and good government, who, for the sake of imperial favour, press forward "in primis ordinibus," to extend the dominion of Muscovite supremacy and darkness; as Milton says, "Hardy and industrious to support tyrannic power." This man is exceedingly active and enterprising. He has formed a corps, dressed, armed, and exercised, "*à la Tcherkesse.*" It is partly made up of Russians, and partly of all the traitors and other runagates of Circassian origin he can lay his hands on. It is he who has struck terror into, and paralysed, the provinces on the Kûban, to the eastward of Shapsuk, which are open and practicable to the operations of an army; and in all of which there are large villages. On these he has pounced suddenly (often by night), with light artillery and his infantry mounted, and borne off men, women, and children into captivity. He has given even Abazak a specimen of what it may expect if it join actively

in the war, and made one attempt upon these two provinces some years ago, but he retired after having reached Abûn, whether on account of the determined opposition he met, or of instructions he had received, I know not. The absence of large villages unfit these provinces, in a great measure, for success in his mode of warfare. It was he (not General Williamineff), whom the young Prince Pshûghûï charged and despoiled of his war-horse, as narrated in the song I translated.

In the provinces to the eastward, the princes and the higher class of nobles still possess considerable power over their own serfs, even that of life and death, and of transference by sale to others, when they have committed crimes. They also preside at public trials and decide upon the fines to be imposed upon persons who commit offences; but these fines, and also the proceeds of the sale of culprits as slaves, by way of punishment, are appropriated as here. They raise no revenue from the people. Some of these chiefs still indulge in one of the ancient privileges of "their order"; that of assembling for exploits of plunder, either in neighbouring provinces or in Russia (notwithstanding their *quasi* peace with her), having their faces masked for fear of discovery, and speaking together a language not understood by others, or perhaps a mere "slang" of the craft, to prevent the intrusion of the uninitiated.

The fraternities of these provinces are on much the same footing as the same associations here.

It is said that in Abazak, Shapsuk, and Notwhatsh, no such power as I have mentioned above

was ever possessed by the chiefs; but I do not altogether believe this assertion of the tokavs; especially as it is not supported by the testimony of the nobles here. There is no doubt, however, that what power was possessed by the chiefs of the two latter provinces in particular has been on the wane for a considerable time, and that the Pasha of Anapa contributed much to break it down by his exhortations to the people to imitate the Turkish Mussulmans in establishing entire equality, in conformity with the declaration of the Koran, that all men are equal in the sight of God.

I find here a mussulman observance (equally unquestionable with the above mussulman axiom) prevalent to a considerable degree; viz. that of giving a portion of one's possessions to the poor at this season. It is collected by the mollahs (not entirely as a free-will offering and token of good mussulmanship), and a portion is intended for their behoof. Whether they deal honestly by the remainder I cannot say; but the donors may choose as treasurers those mollahs in whom they have most confidence. Some also further imitate the Turks in feasting great numbers of the poor during the nights of the fast of Ramazan.

In the provinces in which the chiefs have retained their power, the population *is said* to be the most orderly and most thoroughly mussulman, and to hold in as great aversion, as those now at war, any idea of subjugation to Russia.

After Osman Pasha had betrayed Anapa to the Russians, and Turkey had submitted to the terms

dictated to her in the treaty of Adrianople — by which, among real sacrifices on her part, she was constrained, as regards Circassia, to go through the forms of ceding that which she had never owned; viz. "tout le littoral de la Mer Noire"—the Circassians became convinced that for them the chief, if not the only hope, dwelt in "native swords and native ranks." They made preparation, therefore, to continue alone the war with Russia. For this purpose Sefir Bey, the most distinguished of their Princes, Hadji-okû Mehmet, their chief judge, and other persons of rank and influence, set out on a tour through the provinces. In each province they were met by a congress of delegates, specially chosen, who took oath for their respective communities, that they would remain faithful to each other, and would reject whatever terms of submission Russia might propose, unless under their general concurrence and sanction. At the same time they constituted the Prince and the Judge their ambassadors for endeavouring to procure foreign aid; and the former their plenipotentiary for remaining abroad in prosecution of that object. A special condition was made, I believe, for the consent, or even presence of Sefir Bey, before any change could be made in the terms of the convention. He has been absent about seven years; and as he shows no symptom of a disposition to return under present circumstances (which cannot be construed into an evidence of fear, as on all hands he is admitted to be one of the bravest of the brave), he may remind us of the lawgiver who swore his subjects to remain obedient to his laws until his return, and then quitted his

country for ever. The following are the twelve provinces that combined in this league, and in investing Sefir Bey as their ambassador; viz. Notwhatsh, Shapsuk, Abazak, Psadûg, Temigui, Hatukwoï, Makhosh, Besni, Bashlibaï, Teberdeh, Braki, and Karatshaï.

If England, or any other European power hostile to the aggression of Russia, should determine on erecting here the best of all barriers to her, it would cost but a trifling exertion to rally the whole of the Caucasian populations round one common standard, from their community of interests, of religion (excepting, *in this respect only*, Georgia), and of manners and habits; and the twelve provinces I have specified may be considered as a nucleus already prepared for the aggregation of the others.

In Besni, which is an exceedingly populous, fertile, and beautiful province (as are all those situated on the north of the mountain range) there is a large ancient stone edifice, still habitable, with eleven doors; yet tradition is mute as to the purpose for which it was erected.

Here I have had a most gratifying triumph over two diseases and one Circassian doctor, and have reaped, moreover, the lively gratitude of a numerous and kind family. Soon after our arrival last night, at a late hour (for we had lost our way amid the fog and mountain pathways), I learned that Psadjwe Pshemaff, our host—who is nearly eighty years of age—whose reverend person and efficient aid I had missed for some time back, was confined to bed and dangerously ill of fever and ague, under which he had suf-

fered for several months; and that one of his sons, a very intelligent-looking married man, had got no rest, night or day, for about a week, from a violent diarrhœa, brought on, apparently, by an over dose of melon-seed-oil, given him by a Circassian doctor. The son was soon relieved, to the infinite delight of his brother, whose attachment to him is so great that he had watched night and day by his bed-side during his illness, and who, now that he sees it abated, has become as indefatigable in his attention to me—making his way backwards and forwards through the deep mud that lies between our houses to divide his services between us. Nor were the first effects of European treatment less remarkable in the case of the father; who, when I visited him last night, was quite unconscious of my presence, owing to the delirium in which he then lay, and who has notwithstanding been paying me a visit, in defiance of the severe snow-storm that is setting in, to testify, in most friendly terms, his high sense of the benefits his country has derived from the presence and advice of us Englishmen; the gratitude of himself and family for my services; his fear that their concern about him had prevented my receiving due attention; and his desire that I should not set out in such inclement weather. Yesterday it blew a heavy gale from the S.W. accompanied by rain; and to-day there is a gale from the S.S.W. with snow.

The manners of this old tokav are superior to those of most of his class, who, in this respect, are somewhat inferior to the nobles; which is the more remarkable as they associate intimately together.

Pshemaff's leaving his sick bed to visit me in the guest-house must, in part, be attributed to his strong sense of the duties of hospitality. I have, however, declined his invitation to prolong my stay, and gloomy as the weather looks from those hill-tops, must set out.

Those who intend to travel in the East, should be aware that a knowledge of everything will be expected from them—especially a knowledge of medicines; and that by dispensing a few of the simplest and least hazardous (never forgetting quinine and lancets), and imparting instructions as to their use, they may do much good and win many friends.

Aghsmûg, Christmas.—I have just been to Semez for a couple of days, whence I wrote letters to be despatched by one of two vessels about to sail for Turkey. The opportunity to communicate with my friends at a distance was one inducement to the excursion; but it also seemed advisable that I should make a detour to let the people know, how much the administering of the oath in Shapsuk was likely to suffer from the want of sufficiency of Notwhatsh people to aid in it. The presence of some persons of influence is also indispensable for the formation of a congress with the Abazaks.

The conduct of Shamuz (the most valuable man, after Mensûr, in these provinces) in hitherto abstaining from taking a part in these important transactions, appeared to us peculiarly inexplicable. Some trifling and imaginary causes of offence seemed partly to have occasioned his standing aloof, and the feud with his brother-in-law may have contributed its

part; but I fear I have discovered the prime cause in a weakness that appears to have come over the old chieftain's mind, superinduced, I imagine, by excess of anxiety in regard to the fate of his country. This anxiety he expressed during my present short visit, in few but strong terms, as preying on his mind night and day; and then he reverted to some of his oft-repeated tales of the olden time, while the advice he gave in regard to us seemed anything but wise; viz. that we should leave the people of Shapsuk to manage the swearing in, and return to Semez, there to await what news might arrive from Turkey or England. Yet he admitted, at the same time, the infinite importance of the administration of the oath.

It was truly melancholy to see this old warrior, who, up to last year, had been incessantly engaged in stimulating by his advice and example the fortitude and activity of his countrymen, now seated alone in his unfurnished guest-house, by the embers of a small fire, employed in nothing, so far as I could see, but the washings for his numerous prayers. He says, that in the spring he purposes going to Mecca!

Serfs, it would appear, can *take* their freedom. Two belonging to Shamuz have absented themselves from his service for about a year past; and the question at present is not about forcing them to return, but about the amount of ransom they should pay. The ordinary compensation is from forty to sixty oxen. Six more of his serfs absconded lately, and our hostess is said to be the cause of these desertions, being, although a very clever woman, somewhat of a Xantippe; while Shamuz, although among the

bravest of his countrymen, and the sagest and most eloquent in council, "knows not how to rule his own household:" where wife, sons, and servants, all occasionally take the lead of him.

A serf seeking freedom in this manner flies to the protection of a tokav, and gets him to swear with him an oath of fraternity. After this ceremony the serf cannot be forced back into his master's service; but by law he must compensate him, for which purpose he must previously have contrived to get a sufficient amount of what property he may possess out of his master's hands. When he has by this method obtained his freedom, he is under the protection of the fraternity of the person whose co-operation he procured: whereas, if freed by his master, he remains under the protection of *his* fraternity.

I shall not soon forget my ride of to-day from Semez. The thermometer in the morning stood only $2\frac{1}{2}^{0}$ below zero; but as I crossed the valley, I saw through the trees what appeared great wreaths of smoke, but which I found, on reaching a plain at the foot of the eastern hills, to be dense snow-drift whirled towards us by such violent gusts from these hills that the horses frequently swerved from the path, and it was with some difficulty we kept our seats, and with still greater, (in fact, only with incessant beating,) that I could keep any sensation in my fingers. Matters, as may be supposed, were not much mended on our reaching the summits of the two ridges of high hills that lie between Semez and this glen, where, however, a kind reception and blazing hearth soon obliterated all frosty recollections.

Khabl, Saturday, 6th January 1838.—On the 1st I returned here from my excursion to Notwhatsh, which I fear will not be attended with any beneficial result, so far as regards the attracting of any assistants to the work of oath-administering, and collecting delegates to the congress with the Abazaks, at which the adoption of the oath in their province, the appointment of ambassadors to England, and other matters of importance, might be discussed and decided. Indeed it was with difficulty I got an escort to accompany me thus far, and having declared that I would not return unescorted, I was under the necessity of quartering myself at Adughûm until two volunteers presented themselves in the persons of Hattow, an elderly tokav of great courage and liveliness, and his son-in-law; not that any escort beyond that of my servants was necessary, further than as a means of procuring recruits for the good work. The severity of the weather has been assigned by many as a reason for not leaving home at present, while others made lavish promises of the numbers that would set out when the festival of the Beiram (at which time all wish to be with their families) was over. Of the fulfilment of these promises, however, there is as yet no appearance, although it is eight days since that festival terminated. But many speeches and incidents combine to prove the prevalence of a disposition among both chiefs and people to engage in no new matter of importance, such as the appointment of ambassadors to England, until an answer to the letter sent to Sefir Bey by the congress at Adughûm, in reply to the one he wrote, has been received. The

anxiety to obtain his reply to that communication, in which the idea of a peace with Russia under the guarantee of England was mooted, seems to engross their minds even to the suspension of warlike operations.

During my stay at Adughûm we had two days of thaw, followed immediately by severe frost, varying in intensity till yesterday, that the thermometer stood at 16° below zero, the greatest cold we have yet experienced. This and the former thaws followed by such severe frost have made the plain of the Kûban almost a continuous sheet of ice; so that on our journey here we had to make short stages, for the sake of our horses, and to use precaution in crossing the rivers, the ice in some places not having attained sufficient thickness to be passed in safety.

At Bochundûr, the 31st December, the thermometer standing at 4° below zero, and there being at the time a clear sky and small spiculæ of frozen vapour—star-shaped with six rays—descending, I observed, a little after the rising of the sun, a column of light on each side of and at a short distance from it, of an orange tinge, and crowned with capitals still more luminous at the height of the sun from the horizon.

A day or two previously to my arrival here, my countrymen, who had occasionally visited the scene of the oath-taking to urge it forward by their presence, had, for the purpose of saving time in the equally important matter of the embassy to England, induced our indefatigable and enterprising host, Shahan Gheri, to proceed, accompanied by one of

their most confidential servants, on a mission to Psadûg, for the purpose of getting letters for England, and, if possible, an ambassador for that province. On the 2nd, these individuals returned with a story of the impracticable state of the country and the danger of crossing the rivers. My arrival made this so far incredible, and our incredulity being further increased by the want of assurance their expression of face betrayed, we allowed our features also to reflect this feeling, in consequence of which the messengers at length made a frank confession of the truth; viz.—that having on their way encountered the commission of oath-administrators, consisting (among others) of Mehmet Effendi, Ali-bí, and Nassû (the aged Demosthenes of this province), they forbade their proceeding on the mission, as a certain chief in Psadûg, the judge said, had become suspected; and he added (I presume in one of the passions he is subject to), that if we attempted at present to open communication with or proceed to any of the interior provinces he would shoot us! This bravado was, it seems, not intended to be communicated to us, and was told us secretly by the servant; but feeling, as we do, contempt for it, and knowing, from the evidence of Shamuz, Mensûr, and many other persons of judgment and respectability, that the accusation of the Psadûg chief is false,—Shamuz and Mensûr having even agreed with us in the propriety of this mission,—and viewing the whole affair as a mere ebullition of spleen in the judge, who has been disappointed at his proposal of himself being one of the ambassadors to England not

being accepted, and still more perhaps at the prospect of any portion of his influence being lessened by any matters of importance abroad not remaining under his management in these two provinces, we availed ourselves of the lucky arrival of the Prince of Janat to engage him to undertake the mission, which he readily did. This circumstance is so far of value as it reveals to us the pitch of self-importance to which success in the affair of the oath-administering has wound up the ambitious mind of the judge, and as tending to prove, what we have long suspected—a disposition in the chiefs of Notwhatsh to join in his scheme of making their province supreme, and of confining to it all communication with other countries. This is so far unobjectionable, as the seat of government and of foreign correspondence must be in some one province; and Notwhatsh has pre-eminent claims to this distinction on account of its proximity to the sea, and of the uncompromising and singular hostility to the Russians it has always displayed. Daûd Bey, moreover, on more than one occasion I believe has recommended this selection to the Circassians, of which Mehmet Effendi took care to inform us. But we have frequently told him and the other chiefs of his province that it was our intention to visit if possible all the other provinces, in order that we might be personally cognisant of their states and dispositions, and we think it improper to allow this necessary investigation to be sacrificed to the self-love and ambition of a few individuals. It is impossible after what has just occurred for us to co-operate advantageously with the two chiefs to whom the

direction of affairs is at present consigned. We have therefore determined to return to Notwhatsh for the purpose of appealing to the good sense of Mensûr, Shamuz, and the other leaders of councils there. If we find them indisposed to second our views on this point, on which we think it at length necessary to make a stand, Nadir Bey (Mr. ——) has determined to abandon the undertaking of the embassy to England, and to quit the country by the first opportunity; and so shall I, unless the letters I have desired to be forwarded to me from Constantinople make it expedient for me to remain; while Mr. L—— (with constancy which I find it easier to admire than imitate) intends to stand by the cause a little longer. To-morrow we set out on our return.

The day after the return of Shahan Gheri, my dragoman (whom I had sent with another to the commissioners, if I may so call them, with some important messages from Mensûr) also returned bearing a very soothing messsage—or what was intended to be such—from the Judge; but we find in it additional cause of dissatisfaction, as he gives us to understand that he greatly amplified the recommendations in our favour contained in Sefir Bey's letters, on reading them to others—implying thereby, no doubt, that our reputation among his countrymen depends upon him. Altogether, his is a remarkable and, I am happy to say, here a singular character. Sufficiently well endowed with talents, and possessing natural fitness for business, and acquired habits of application above most of his countrymen, he is withal fickle, dictatorial, passionate and unscrupulous:

and this is the man who has unfortunately obtained from the Porte a firman constituting him mollah and judge-in-chief of these two provinces, in virtue of which appointment*, he has bound by oath all the judges to abide by his directions. Among the mass this gives him influence, which is further increased by his learning, viz., his ability to speak and write Turkish with considerable fluency; and by his foreign travel—that is, having visited Constantinople, Alexandria, Cairo, and Baghdad.

The following is an amusing specimen of the unscrupulous manner in which he sets about carrying his wishes into effect:—one day, during my absence, he and Hassan (a tokav senior from Notwhatsh) came to my countrymen, and giving a doleful account of the progress of the oath-taking, said they should be obliged to abandon the undertaking, unless the Englishmen would go with them to the place of meeting, and endeavour by their presence and exhortations to impress upon the people the necessity of the adoption of the measure. This was readily complied with, and some speeches 'for the nonce' delivered; in consequence of which, as it seemed, the work once more went forward swimmingly; and *then* my countrymen found out (through a Turkish servant who speaks Circassian fluently) that the sole purpose for which their appearance at this special meeting had been required, was to enforce an equal division of the fines between the superintendants of Notwhatsh and Shapsuk, (according to the

* It is simply religious. Islamism combines law with religion, and the Sultan is the head of that faith.

precedent established three years since) about which a dispute had taken place; and that the judge, in pretending to translate their speeches, had represented them as bearing solely on the promotion of this object, putting in their mouths a threat to leave the province if their advice were not complied with! He had previously declared (to display his patriotism) that his services were gratuitously given, at the same time deploring the sacrifice he made in absenting himself so long from his domestic affairs. His character, however, appears to be justly appreciated by all the leading men.

In consequence of my visit to *King* Mensûr, (as some call him) he sent four messages to the commissioners, and the people. The first required that they should send a force, and he would send another, to meet together at Adughûm, for the purpose of inflicting punishment upon a clique of traitors (that is, traders with Russia) and thieves which has been there discovered, and whose ramifications are already wide, and embrace two nobles of Mensûr's fraternity. The two greatest delinquents are already seized and in confinement, and their being drowned, as is decided on, is deferred only until all information about their associates is drawn from them. The second message referred to the Abbats and Janats and their associates—who have deserted their country, and infest this bank of the Kûban by their depredations and hostilities—and required that a decision should be immediately come to in regard to them, either for their restoration, under certain conditions, or for their entire extermination. A third message bespoke for us, from the people of Shapsuk, every sort of con-

sideration and good treatment in their power; and the fourth was a private one from himself to our host, Shahan Gheri, testifying the pleasure it gave him to learn that he had been so kind in his reception of us, and of such service to us in the affairs of the province. This last message proves Mensûr's generosity, as he and Shamuz were at deadly feud with Shahan Gheri, in consequence of his having last year traduced them, as in the pay of Russia. At that time Mensûr went, as he told me, twice into Shapsuk, for the purpose of confronting and fighting with his accuser; but the latter thought proper to avoid him. This and another malpractice he was guilty of, (having not only visited the Russians for the purpose of obtaining presents, but having with the same view, and to prove to them his influence, dressed out the tokavs of his acquaintance, and sent them also to the Russian head-quarters as chiefs of note) made him generally suspected in Notwhatsh, and occasioned his being forbid to enter that province. But his conduct and conversation since our first acquaintance with him have been, in every respect, all that we could wish.

I find that it is customary among the Circassians when a death occurs in a family, for the females to wear black for a time. This may serve, perhaps, as another proof of the former prevalence of Christianity here; for those who have become rigid mussulmans forbid the practice, as at variance with the Koran.

The Prince of Janat has given us some insight into the grievances for which the society of that name left their former seats on this side of the Kûban.

He says that originally the greater part of the north of Notwhatsh belonged to his family and fraternity, and that of Shapsuk to the family of Basti-kû. At this remote period the Zahn-okû family (that of Sefir Bey) was located in Temigui. Subsequently, great numbers of his fraternity having died of the plague, the rest were gradually deprived of much of their ancient possessions, and driven to that portion of Adughûm nearest the Kûban; and many of their numerous slaves having deserted their service without paying the legal compensation, the fraternity at length quitted the province in disgust, removing first to Psadûg, and lately to the north bank of the Kûban, opposite to the island occupied by the Abbats, with whom, consequently, they are now identified.

The Turkish word oghlû (son) is equivalent to the Circassian okû, or kû, the conjunction of which with the names to which it is very generally attached, has, it is said, been transmitted from remote ages.

The prince repeated to us a story of the derivation of the name "Tcherkess," which, though probably fabulous, (or mixed with fable) is yet so generally narrated by the people (Potoski having in 1797 heard part of the tradition from Kabarda), as to merit some notice. It is, that the Circassians, Albanians, and Kurds, are descended from three brothers, princes of Arabistan; one of whom having somehow deprived a person of an eye, and this individual having refused to accept of any other satisfaction than the *lex talionis*, the matter was referred to the Caliph Omar, who decided, that if the aggrieved party insisted on it, he was entitled by law

to have "an eye for an eye." In consequence of which decision, the three brothers fled from the country, and went to Kara-hissa (in Asia Minor). There a message from Arabistan overtook them, to the effect, that they might return to their native country, for the maimed man had consented to accept of such compensation as they chose to give. But the brothers had now determined to seek their fortunes elsewhere; and they departed from the house where they had found refuge, each repeating a word from which the name of his nation was derived.

Having remarked to the prince that I had never seen potatoes in this country, he exclaimed that there was plenty of them. Accordingly next morning he brought us specimens of his potatoes, which we found to be excellent Jerusalem artichokes. The former esculent seems to be here unknown, as well as turnips, carrots, and many other valuable vegetables; in fact, those generally cultivated are only kidney and haricot beans, gourd, onions, beet-root, and cabbages. The two latter are preserved with salt and eaten with honey!

The value of oxen here at present, as appears from the payment of some fines, is about ten shillings each. Grain is exceedingly abundant, but at present not so cheap as in Notwhatsh. The sorts principally cultivated are millet, rye, barley, oats (in this order of proportion), some Turkey corn, and very little wheat. Shapsuk is considerably larger, more fertile, and populous than Notwhatsh, as the hills, especially to the east, recede gradually towards the south. From the description,

it would appear that among the wild animals on the reedy and uncultivated prairies on the Kûban are elks; but the *state* we are kept in, and the difficulty of mustering an adequate escort, prevent our going to see natural curiosities. Our endeavours are somewhat paralysed, also, by a misconstruction put upon the attempts of this sort that have been made; the Circassians having no idea of a disinterested love of science.

Since the commencement of this month the weather has been in general fine, with the temperature varying from 16° above to 16° below zero, which is, as I said, the greatest extremity of cold we have yet experienced*.

* On the 1st January, when accidentally deprived of the thermometer, we all thought it must have been even colder than this.

LETTER XVI.

RETURN TO SEMEZ—DIFFERENCE OF THE WINTER TEMPERATURE AT SEMEZ AND TO THE NORTH OF THE HILLS—MEDICAL PRACTICE AND CIRCASSIAN PREJUDICES—MILITARY MOVEMENTS—MENSUR'S ORATION — DISAPPOINTED VOLUNTEERS — MORE DISAPPOINTMENTS.

PSEMAGHU, NOTWHATSH, 11*th January*, 1838.

MY DEAR ——. On the 7th we set out from Khabl, and we are now returning to Semez by short stages, on account of the icy state of the roads. At Bochundûr and Waff, the thermometer standing at 14° and 15° below zero, and the sky almost clear, we were gratified by the sight of beautiful lunar halos. On the first evening there was one around the moon, and one, which intersected its centre, was projected toward the sun; on the second the halos were similar, though smaller, while a larger one included the whole. It appeared to be a spectacle quite novel to our Circassian associates, who inquired at me what it portended. Having unfortunately predicted one or two of the late gales of wind, I have brought upon myself constant applications for foreknowledge of the weather, even for months to come.

Here, at the house of Hattow, is the most convenient and agreeable room for the present cold weather I have yet seen in this country. It has

another between it and the outer door; is heated by a large and well constructed earthen stove, communicating with the fireplace of the latter; has a capacious divan; and, above all, two windows, which, unlike all the others we have suffered from, admit light without the bitter frosty wind, having frames covered with paper. Among us civilised folks it is too commonly the case, that the air of heaven—one of our best friends—is shunned and excluded as our worst enemy;* but the Circassians are in the other extreme, and appear to me to admit it to too great familiarity. Besides the way it makes through their thatching and abundant apertures left for it in the walls, it has free admission, in all weathers, by the open door and windows, while the enormous funnel of a chimney creates a strong draught. This is the general state of the guest-houses, with a few exceptions; while others, owned by most hospitable landlords, are left in such a state of disrepair, as would make many Englishmen hesitate about stabling their horses in them. Of this kind was the one I slept in at Bochundûr, on my way to Khabl, with the thermometer 4^0 minus. The end of the room, which communicated with a wicker stable, was itself not much better than open wicker-work; while a mass of the clay plaster behind the door, about as big as the doorway, had fallen from the wicker-work, and, with other numerous apertures, left such free passage for the wind, as made the room, at a few feet from the

* I recollect having heard the colonel of one of our cavalry regiments say to his son, on coming out of a house; "Billy, my dear, put on your gloves, you 'll catch cold!"

fire, little better shelter than the adjoining hill side. But an enormous fire is never wanting, so that the chief guests, whose divans are close beside it, are grilled on one side and frozen on the other. At two or three feet from these fires I have frequently of late been interrupted in writing by the ink freezing in my pen.

Semez, Saturday 20th.—Yesterday we arrived at our old quarters here (our Circassian home, or prison, as my companions call it), after nearly a fortnight's series of short stages—so exceedingly tender of their horses are all those who in general accompany us; which care is, however, in some degree necessary, none of the horses being shod. But no Circassian in the least degree above destitution ever dreams of walking even a mile or two; thus his horse, of necessity, becomes as valuable as his own natural means of locomotion, and his fondness and care of it are proportionate.

As the frost continued, until yesterday that it relaxed a little, the roads have been execrable, and the passage of the high hills that intervene between the source of the Psebebsi and the vale of Hokhoï was rendered additionally difficult by drifts of snow, and a very high cold wind. On the 14th we called, in passing, on Mensûr, and found his foot decidedly convalescent. On explaining to him the causes of our return from Shapsuk, he was evidently much irritated and excited, yet he mastered his feelings so far, and even made an attempt or two to give a livelier tone to the conversation and to our feelings. But we judged it right not to admit of this; and

having given him to understand, that we considered it absolutely necessary for the good of the cause generally, that Abazak and the provinces on the Kûban should be combined with Notwhatsh and Shapsuk in sending ambassadors to England, (as neither that nation nor any other would take a lively and beneficial interest in their affairs, for the sake of the latter only), we, that is Nadir Bey and I, expressed our determination to leave the country, unless our advice in this respect were listened to, and active measures in accordance with it immediately adopted. His ingenuity was next taxed to induce us to grant him time to try what he could effect among his countrymen in furtherance of our views; and, after some demur, in order to stimulate his activity we at length agreed to allow a fortnight, at the expiry of which time, if some people of influence were not ready to accompany us to Abazak, we said we should consider ourselves absolved from all obligation to take any further interest in the affairs of this country, and at liberty to depart by the first opportunity that offered.

On our way up the valley of Psebebsi, an elderly man met us, and saluted us very civilly. We learned subsequently that it was he who had acted as an emissary for the Russians in the design upon us which I mentioned on 30th September; in consequence of which his house had been burned, and all his goods confiscated. That night we lodged in the same valley with some Armenians, who are under the protection of Mensûr, and next morning, just before we set out, a messenger from that chief arrived, to beg that I

would exchange a handsome grey horse I rode for a white one he had sent. The messenger had been desired to assure me, that it was an active, strong animal, though not good in appearance; and certainly on inspecting him some such warrandice seemed highly necessary, for no horse of our train, not even the baggage one, had so sorry an outside as this upon which one of the governors of the country, as they are pleased to style us, was now desired to make the tour of his state duties! Although this message appeared to me exceedingly ill-timed, and even involving some personal disrespect, (as Mensûr knew that our means were for the time exhausted, and that I could not therefore procure another suitable horse,) what vexed me most was, the appearance of the affair of presents—for in no other light could the exchange be viewed—being of greater consideration even with Mensûr (as we had found it to be with several others) than the interest of the country. I therefore sent him a message to this effect—refusing to make such an exchange, and saying it would be soon enough for me to determine what I should do with the horse when, the time having arrived for my quitting the country, I should have no further use for him. His conduct in this matter has, I have since learned, been strongly condemned by some of the tokavs, but I am not inclined to view it entirely in the light I did at first; because Mensûr is anything but avaricious, and upon recollection of some things which dropped from him in late conversations, his demand of the horse appears to have resulted chiefly from a jealousy in regard to his influence suffering

by its being seen that other chiefs—whom he may justly consider of less merit than himself—have received more of our bounty. But he has probably not considered that from most of these chiefs we had received equivalents in hospitality and attentions. If, however, in our power hereafter, we must make him amends for this. The incident may serve, however, to show how difficult a matter it is for strangers in this country to avoid doing mischief in bestowing presents among a set of chiefs whose rank is essentially equal, and whose value and estimation in the country can only be learned through much experience and careful observation. We learn, moreover, that although the tokavs have never evinced in their conduct to us any semblance of such a feeling, some jealousy has been expressed on their part at all the presents of most value having been made to the Vorks. Our rule with regard to presents has been, to give to those only from whom we have received hospitality or services: to attempt to act upon any other might produce more evil than good.

In passing on our way by the eastern end of the valley of Anapa, we lodged with Az-Demir, an opulent tokav, and were shown in the vicinity of his hamlet another salt spring, which we found still unfrozen although very slightly impregnated. In summer, however, it is said to be much salter. It is situated at the base of the hills, which there form the boundary of the valley. On the stones around it I observed a deep ferruginous dye.

Semez 29th.—Yesterday cannon and even musket reports were heard here for some time, and

appeared to proceed from the coast towards Anapa, though the wind was to the southward of that direction. Some hostilities have of course taken place.

The feathered inhabitants of the Kûban knowing instinctively the greater mildness of these regions, and the greater chance they here have of finding unfrozen streams, now swarm abundantly in this neighbourhood. Mergansers, golden-eyed and other ducks, haunt all the running waters of this valley, and in the bay floats many a peaceful fleet of stately swans and geese. Wild boars and deer seem also obliged to take a wider range for food, and have been roaming about this valley within these few days. A wolf or two have also been seen. Alas for the Mussulman prejudice that prevents us making a savoury repast of the acorn-fed wild boar! I have just learned another unfortunate interdict of this religion, in talking over with the people here Nadir Bey's chance of getting a vessel to sail with him shortly. It appears that no strict Mussulman will put to sea between the 24th of December and about the 12th of March. "But," said the handsome, intelligent, young Turkish mollah from Trebizond, who told us this, putting his hand on his heart, "A man with a good conscience may disregard this injunction." Some do so whether qualified or not. It would be well were there more so qualified, in which case a safe trade might be carried on during winter, so far as regards danger from the Russians; for, if they have the same religious prejudice and exemption, there must be few good consciences among them, if one may judge from

the tenacity with which they remain in harbour during this season.

Three or four days ago I was requested to visit a person dangerously ill at a neighbouring hamlet, where I found a young woman in great agony from pleurisy. By bleeding, &c., she is now almost quite well; and I mention her case to record the following injurious prejudices. I found her fever so high the first night, that I gave her medicine to procure sleep; at the same time enjoining a sage-looking elderly woman in attendance that she should on no account be disturbed. Yet next evening, when I inquired as to how she had slept, a little girl who was then in waiting naïvely assured me she had not been allowed to sleep, as a person sat up with her for that purpose! I had been more particular in my injunctions in this respect, from having heard that, in treating those who have been wounded, the Circassians are careful not to permit them to sleep; lest, I suppose, it should become eternal. I found also that my patient, although I had purposely infused her medicines in a copious draught, was suffering from severe thirst, which (according to another notion of the country) her attendant assured me they had been careful not to permit her to allay! In consequence of these fatal errors I went out to speak to the husband, and was proceeding to read him a lecture upon the danger his wife lay under owing to them, when I was encountered with a third prejudice; being reminded by Luca that he could know nothing of what was going on in his wife's room, as it was against all usage for him to enter it during her illness or to take

any charge of her management; and that it would be considered the height of unmanliness for him to show anxiety about her. But, in the little that subsequently passed between us, I was gratified to see nature assert her rights in spite of this absurd prejudice; for while I spoke of the danger the attendants made his wife incur, (by the bye she is remarkably handsome) the tears stood full in his eyes, and a forced laugh and some few words not to the purpose which ensued, betrayed the intensity of the strife of feeling he suffered under.

A strange story has just been repeated to us, as having been brought by the last ship that arrived, of a squall at Constantinople among the ambassadors, in consequence of some offensive letter having, at one of their meetings, been produced for a claimant by the Russian ambassador, and been claimed by the English one; when the former addressed the latter in such terms of insult, that he applied to the Porte to have evidence of them given him, that he might send it to his Government. Upon this foundation we have erected a fine "castle in the air" for Circassia, not doubting that she formed the subject of the letter. Something, possibly, has occurred, and it may be amusing to compare with the substance, the form and size its shadow has acquired in extending thus far.

The conversation having turned, a few evenings ago, upon America and her wondrous achievements within the last half century, one of my countrymen overheard our old host attesting so far what we had said to a young Anapali Turk, whom he was inform-

ing "as how" the English had brought the Americans from a state utterly savage into one of high civilisation, as he had seen evinced by Americans he had met at Constantinople! I might have taken the trouble of rectifying the error, for the sake of some friends "in the far West," had not an incident "Nadir Bey" related, as having occurred lately in Switzerland, been fresh upon my memory. A young Jonathan entered a coffee-house, much frequented by Englishmen, and thus bespoke himself, "Waiter, do you speak American?"

30*th*.—We have just learned that the firing heard here last Sunday was occasioned by a sortie, which the Russians made from Anapa, for the purpose of burning a vessel belonging to Sefir Bey, which lay at Sûkwa, about five miles to the south of the fortress. In this enterprise I am sorry to say they succeeded, as well as in destroying a portion of the merchandise which was stored at that place, for the purpose of being shipped by the vessel. About 100 men with a piece of artillery set out from the fortress very early in the morning, and made so rapid a march that they had accomplished their object and were on their return before more than twenty-five Circassians could assemble; this small band, however, attacked the Russians, and, although some of them were even without powder, they captured the officer and a cart, in which some of the merchandise and rigging of the vessel were being carried off. In this encounter two of the Circassians were killed, two Turks wounded, and a woman and two children carried off by the Russians. A Russian or two were left dead on the

field; how many others, killed or wounded, were carried off is not known. If their progress could have been impeded only for a little longer, they must have been entirely cut off by the great body of Circassians which assembled from the neighbourhood at the sound of the cannons. The Russians had been wise enough not to fire them till necessary for their safety, from fear of such an assembly. The success of this exploit is said to have been entirely owing to the treachery of an Armenian, whom Daûd Bey advised the Circassians to execute, for a piece of treachery discovered at the time of his visit; which recommendation our amiable friend Mehmet Effendi afterwards wrote to Constantinople had been acted upon. This man induced the captain, some time before, to defer his sailing, by a promise of an abundant lading and high freight, and then had the effrontery to be found acting as guide to the Russians, and crying out in terms of abuse to the Circassians.

In consequence of some conversation with our old Konak Shamuz, he has at length come to understand the importance of sending ambassadors immediately to England; and having volunteered a mission in order to convert the persons of influence in this province to this view of the question, he and Luca (whom he wished to have with him) have just set out for this purpose.

Having, as I mentioned before, expended all the resources we brought with us, and being determined to live under as little obligation to any one as possible, we have been much gratified to find the general integrity of the English character, even here, stand

us in good stead. Some Turkish merchants of Asia Minor have replenished our strong-box, and offered us whatever more goods we may require, accepting in payment our drafts upon Constantinople. We have been thus timeously enabled to make further presents to Mensûr, and some other deserving individuals.

Cottons of various sorts, coloured or plain, and especially the power-loom kind, form the standard currency of this country, with adjuncts of black, yellow, and red leather, and a few silks. The most trifling of our purchases is thus made a tedious matter, by long debates about the quality of the goods. Yet living is not dear here; *e. g.* when our funds were at a low ebb, an Armenian brought us from a distance, and, as he said, by order of one of our servants, wheaten flour, millet, bûghû (a grain for making pilaff), and *haricots*, to the amount of 289 lbs. My youngest countryman (as we had not before bought such things) immediately exclaimed, "We shall be ruined;" but on making a bargain and calculating the value, we found the whole come to only 15*s.* 8*d.*, or in reality 7*s.* 10*d.*; for the prices of our cottons here are at least cent. per cent. above those of England. All the Armenian's importation was gladly taken.

31*st.*—My two ardent companions, who have long desired to "flesh their maiden swords" on the invaders of this country, and have long ago and repeatedly offered to take part in any exploit the Circassians may undertake—after having suffered repeated disappointments as to storming of forts, expeditions across the Kûban, &c., have at length the

immediate prospect of one of the latter, as Ali-bí of Ozerek has arrived to intimate to us that in consequence of the late sorties from Anapa, an expedition across the Kûban, on a large scale, has been agreed on among the chiefs; and that if we wish to take part in it, we must set out immediately for the place of muster. We go to-morrow. I shall be attached to the *medical department*, in conformity with a request of the elders and my own determination, not to take part in hostilities.

Ali-bí's intimation corroborates what we have long suspected and heard reported; viz., that the Circassians had determined on abstaining from expeditions across the Kûban this year, because the Russian invading army had this year abstained from devastating the country; which moderation they seem to connect somehow with the proposition for peace under the guarantee of England, which they made to the Russian general, by order of Sefir Bey, in consequence, as he said, of a communication to him to that effect from the British ambassador. This resolution of the Circassians always appeared to me to have a very poor foundation, because it seemed much more probable that the sudden and harmless retreat of the Russians from Ghelenjik was caused by the burning of the stock of provisions there, than by any movement of mercy or change of policy; yet we thought it expedient not to endeavour to make them depart from it, in case the Russians had by any possibility changed their tactics. What warrandice there was for giving them the other expectation (as to England's interference) remains to be proved.

February 3rd.—We set out from our first night's quarters, in the valley of Anapa, accompanied by our host there and several persons who had joined us at Semez ; the short notice not having admitted of our waiting for many more who were to follow. The day was beautiful, with a mild southerly wind ; and as we descended the steep wooded hills that form the southern boundary of the larger plain of Hokhoï, we discovered, winding through its thickets, the first large party of warriors on their march to the general rendezvous. This place became evident to us by the time we reached the plain, whence we saw, on the gentle acclivity of the northern hills, two dense and numerous assemblages, besides many smaller ones, to which lesser parties were streaming by all the pathways of the valley. As we approached the first large muster, a debate appeared to terminate, for the warriors composing it rose from the ground, and some on horseback and many on foot proceeded up the hill to join a larger one. In the midst of it floated a large standard, which we afterwards learnt to be that of Mensûr, who was there with his three or four hundred Psebebsi men. We halted on the opposite side of the ravine, near which this general gathering was held. We calculated the number assembled to be at that time about fifteen hundred. The spectacle was equally novel, exciting, and picturesque—a mass of rugged mountaineers, men and boys, horse and foot, mingled promiscuously, with the flags of cognizance of their respective chiefs fluttering over them—volunteering invasion of a great empire to seek revenge for the ravaged homes of their countrymen.

In a short time we were invited to join the assembly, and were immediately accosted by many old friends, who appeared delighted at our presence, and some of whom informed us that the expectation of it had caused so great a muster, the people being desirous to prove to us in the expected warfare that they were not without courage and confidence in their cause.

The first salutations were no sooner over than we were invited to seat ourselves upon some scanty handfuls of straw, when a dense and narrow circle of curious strangers was immediately formed around us; but we were soon relieved from the annoyance of this (to which by the way we are pretty well broken in) by the arrival of Shamuz, Mensûr, and Hatukwoï, with other persons of influence; all of that description in this portion of the province with whom we have become acquainted appearing to be present on this occasion. A pipe or two were then smoked, when the chiefs rose, and Mensûr began, in a quiet conversational manner, a speech which soon swelled into the full current of his energetic and impressive oratory, and was listened to by the dense mass of warriors around us with the strictest attention. Its object was to disclose to the assembly the purpose and direction of the intended expedition, (which had hitherto been known but to a few of the leaders, lest they should be betrayed by spies) and to give the people advice as to how they should conduct themselves in the execution of the enterprise. "We must not," said he, "engage ourselves in the capture of booty, the greater part of which must of necessity be lost or destroyed upon our march, but must make

it our object to weaken the enemy by the destruction of his forts, and the capture of his ammunition; and if we should be so fortunate as to obtain any cannons, we must not, as formerly, leave them as things of no use, but must endeavour to transport them across the Kûban. Above all things, you must be led by the advice, and obedient to the orders, of those who have much more experience than the most of you. We will make Shamuz our commander, who has crossed the Kûban more frequently and seen more of warfare in general than any of us. I doubt not many of you will be eager to display your courage before our friends these Englishmen, but it will, I am sure, be no gratification to them to see your blood spilled needlessly; be therefore prudent as well as courageous. An old and very religious man predicted unfavourably of this expedition, as revealed to him by his observation of the stars. But although such men are worthy of all respect on account of their piety and learning, they are not those by whose counsels we should in every case be guided. Yet must we never forget our duty to God; for if we duly remember him, he will not forget or desert us. Let us therefore put our trust in Him, and go in His name."

This address—the exact phraseology of which I do not of course pretend to give—was followed by some short speeches from other seniors present, when the chiefs, and almost all those of mature age, left us to say their evening prayers, for the sun was by this time about to set. Their places around us were supplied by lads and boys (many of the latter, the two sons of Shamuz amon them, being only of

twelve to fifteen years of age, a few even younger), and we had to reply, as we best could, to numerous applications for powder and balls.

As the sun went down, the pleasant southerly wind which had blown all day ceased, and was succeeded by a strong frosty breeze from the east, accompanied by a chilling fog, which no doubt contributed to give edge to the feeling with which I prepared to bid my companions adieu for the night.

All this part and most of the rest of the valley is uninhabited, on account of the devastation the Russians have committed here of late; there was therefore no shelter for any one but such as the scanty brushwood afforded, among which numerous little fires now flickered; and beside one of these my countrymen had to pass the tedious two hours, at the expiry of which they were to set forth on their first war exploit. Having subscribed my horse, pelisse, and pistol for their equipment, I parted from them (expressing our hopes to meet again "here or hereafter") and set out to seek a night's lodging, escorted by the chief surgeon, who had been dissuaded by the chiefs from accompanying the expedition, on account of his bad health and their wish that he should remain for some days in my company, in order that I might observe the nature of his disease, and endeavour to cure it; for he is considered a very valuable man, and attends many a sick-bed gratuitously. With him and Luca, who was sadly disappointed at my refusing to allow him to pass the Kûban to show his Georgian courage, I proceeded over the hill to the east, with a feeling of something like degradation in

not taking part with the patriotic band I had parted from, the first division of which I saw, on looking behind me, had already set forth, and formed a dark mass, moving slowly through the thickets towards the Kûban.

As it was late before we reached any houses, it was not till after having experienced three or four refusals at other hamlets, that we got quarters in this, where I have received most hospitable treatment. This, however, produced a somewhat annoying contrast whenever I thought of the war-party, and especially of my uninitiated countrymen; for throughout last night there has prevailed, on the height where I am lodged, a high and bitter east wind, and so dense a fog that it seemed to me much to be feared that the guides of the Circassians might lose their way, and the army get divided without the possibility of reuniting. No cannon-reports have however yet been heard, and the rumour this morning is, that the passage of the river was not effected. I think this very probable, as there have been five days of considerable thaw, the thermometer ranging from 33° to 55°, with a strong southerly wind; and since then only three days of slight frost. Time will show.

Semez, Saturday 10*th.*—After waiting impatiently a great portion of this day-week (at the hamlet in which the above was written) for my companions, who, it was said, would call there for me on their return from the Kûban, I set out in search of and found them, safely ensconced at another, within an hour's ride.

When bivouacked on the hill of rendezvous, one of my countrymen observed Mensûr going about among the people, and addressing several individuals among them, after which many shook hands together. This he afterwards learned was a temporary reconciliation of feuds between fraternities, in order that all might heartily co-operate in the intended expedition. They did not leave this hill with the army till two in the morning on the 3rd, when they marched towards the Kûban; but, as might be supposed, so little order prevailed in their route through the oak thickets which there abound, that they soon got adrift from the Semez banner—that of the Generalissimo (which was but a handkerchief on the end of a long pole), and from one another; and Shamuz has since said that he was almost equally distracted between his military duties, and his anxiety and search for them. A halt was made within two or three miles of the river, and, as it had previously been resolved that the passage should not be attempted during the night, the tiresome remainder of it had to be spent, with dissimilar fortunes—by Nadir Bey in a cottage, near which he happened to halt; and by Alcide Bey (Mr. L.) beside a watch-fire.

At an hour or two before sunrise, the order to advance was given, and the army (which had received contributions during the whole night, and is said to have at length amounted, in horse and foot, to nearly 5000 warriors) marched down towards the river. But here it was found that the thawed mud was too deep to admit of the infantry (upon which the greatest dependence was placed in case of a

Russian force collecting to oppose the retreat) making its way through it, and when the cavalry reached the ice of the river, the passage over it was found equally impracticable owing to large canals made by the late thaw. Mensûr quickly found a remedy for these flaws, in the construction of bridges of fascines, in the preparation of which the host was still busily working, when Shamuz arrived, and gave orders that the passage should not be attempted. By this time, however, about 300 men (chiefly dehlikhans, or youths) had already passed over the first bridges and rotten ice, among whom were my countrymen and Tûghûz. He, in particular, and some other ardent spirits, busied themselves making trips across the ice to get recruits for a smaller expedition, seeing that the larger one was thought inexpedient. This smaller body then set forward, having first gathered together under the lofty trees which grace the narrow elevation forming the bank of the river, and, in an impressive manner, uttered a short prayer, with uplifted hands. Several messengers now arrived to entreat my countrymen to return, to which they replied, that it was impossible for Englishmen to do so when others advanced. But the impropriety of the attempt so soon became evident to the few seniors who were with the party, that a halt was called for a discussion, which however was interrupted by a fiery spirit from Adughûm (one perhaps of the hundred Tûghûz who had previously sworn to stand by him in effecting something if they met the enemy, or perish) dashing forward as fast as the deep marsh beyond the banks would admit of. He was followed

by about fifty of the dehli-khans, and the two Englishmen, the rest of the party remaining on the river's bank.

Jambolet, an elderly tokav of extraordinary courage, who accompanied my countrymen, then represented to them that it was their presence which caused the others to persevere in their attempt, and that to them would be attributed any disastrous consequences which might result. This argument, joined to other considerations I shall mention immediately, served to convince them of the propriety of their not urging the others forward by their presence; and as the impracticability of the attempt had now become but too palpable, they all turned their horses' heads towards the river—evidently to the infinite mortification of many—and made the best of their way back. The considerations which, so far as I have been able to learn, determined Shamuz and his council of elders to countermand the expedition, were these:—1st, The decayed state of the ice on the river, which, had a considerable portion of the army been obliged by the operations of the enemy to go suddenly upon it, might have given way, and caused a frightful and useless sacrifice of life; other branches, or, at least, overflowings, of the river being also to be crossed, the ice of which must have been equally unsafe. 2nd, The thaw of the marshes on each side of the river which prevented the co-operation of the infantry, upon which lay the chief dependence for covering the retreat, which was to have been at a place higher up, where the ice might have been as bad, or even worse. These are the main and apparently sufficient reasons;

to which may be added—that, supposing the Kûban to have been safely crossed by the whole cavalry, its advance thereafter could have been only along a sort of natural causeway or slight elevation, (the reeds on which are of less growth,) as the marshes on each side were too deep, and the principal and further part of this causeway formed a right angle with an eminence at its termination, upon which a strong body of Russians were drawn up, with artillery, which would have raked the Circassians' line most destructively in its advance.

The Kûban here is not above a fourth of the breadth of the Thames at Westminster; but the reeds and marshes extend to a mile, or a mile and a half, on each side. Considerably further up, the river forms two branches, and the northern is much the larger.

This, so far as I can learn, was the largest muster that has taken place in this province for some time; and many are the wailings we have heard that so fine an army was prevented acting by the unfavourable state of the previous weather; the mortification of the men of this province being increased by their having heard that their neighbours of Shapsuk, under Ghuzel Beg, have just made a successful foray into Russia, and returned safely with very large booty; which booty, in spite of Mensûr's speech, might perhaps have formed the leading object for a large portion of the Notwhatsh army.

But this muster must by no means be considered as the fighting force of the province, as it was made suddenly, and it is said—and we believe justly—that

one, more than ten times as large, could be effected if requisite. For the objects that were in view on the occasion in question; viz. the storming of some of the smaller Russian protecting forts (which extend along the top of a hill at about five to six miles from the river, the intervening space being left uninhabited), and the destruction of a large *Russian* village, the late muster was considered by the chiefs as much too large; and they say that its greatness might even have been prejudicial. I say *Russian* village, for on my asking my medical companion if the Tatars, who form the great majority of the population on the other side, were ever attacked in such expeditions, he seemed rather hurt, and replied, "those who are of the same religion as ourselves, always enjoy perfect security."

It required but little time to ascertain the causes of this man's malady (a violent retching, sometimes bringing up blood, after his meals); for he was candid enough, as most Turks and Circassians are, in respect of their errors, in answer to my inquiry as to whether he had ever in his life been a hard drinker, to confess that, when he was a prisoner to the Russians, he had learned to drink, and did so then, and afterwards among the Turks of Anapa, to great excess. This and his present bad management appear causes sufficient for the delicacy of his stomach, and it was painfully ludicrous so see him, during the few days we were together, eat, notwithstanding my advice, as heartily as one in health, and then shortly afterwards stretch himself on a mattress and have a man tread upwards, upon his back, to

promote his vomiting! I taught him a substitute for this barbarous practice, and gave him some medicine and much advice, yet I fear he must eventually, and like many others, fall, self-immolated, to the "god of his belly."

The day after the attempted crossing of the Kûban a council of the chiefs was held upon the affair of the embassy to London; and after repeated messages passing between it and us, we found it impossible to agree, as we insisted upon the matter being gone about immediately, in order that the ambassadors and letters from the different provinces might accompany Nadir Bey by the first ship that sails after the Kûrban-Beiram, so as to be in England as early as possible during the ensuing session of parliament: while they exhausted all their ingenuity to devise reasons why nothing should be done till after the period of that sacrifice (about the 12th of March), by which time they say they shall in all probability have received an answer to their letter to Sefir Bey, from Adughûm.

This question of delay was the sole one of debate and disagreement. Presuming, as we do, from a letter which Lord Ponsonby did me the honour of addressing to me, that nothing but disappointment, and the loss of most critical time, was likely to come from the negotiation said to have been opened by his lordship with Sefir Bey, we did all in our power to drive the Circassians from that false scent, during the two ensuing days, but without success, for they perhaps think they are now in higher hands; and, as it appears certain that the waiting for these letters from Constantinople may protract matters infinitely beyond

the time Nadir Bey can possibly remain in this country—on account of private affairs of importance —he has been reluctantly obliged to abandon the idea of taking the ambassadors with him.

In this Constantinople negotiation—hitherto kept in a great measure in the back-ground—we now see, "or think we see," the clue for the labyrinth of perplexity we had so long wandered in; viz., that while desiring, as all here ardently do, the interposition of England, they have been, on that account, unwilling to controvert us directly in any respect; hoping that eventually they might be enabled indirectly to effect their own plan, which was to protract our stay in the country till they received these much-desired letters from Sefir Bey, and then to go forward with the good news they expect them to contain, and produce a great excitement in Abazak and the provinces eastward on the Kûban, which might thus be induced not only to join readily in sending ambassadors and addresses to England, but to give perhaps immediate assistance to the two provinces of Shapsuk and Notwhatsh, in carrying on the war. For these reasons we were allowed to project our journey to Abazak, and received abundant promises of accompaniment, the fulfilment of which was put aside by Shamuz and others, when we came to require it, in the manner I have related. To us two who have been longest here, this so unlooked-for defeat in regard to the embassy to England is a severe mortification; for we looked upon that mission as the crowning of all the labour and sacrifices we have bestowed upon the country. We fondly hoped that, although

the self-interest of our countrymen in the independence of Circassia might sleep on, their sympathy would at length be awakened to a friendly interposition for the relief of this long-suffering, heroic people. At all events we were convinced that, by means of that mission to England, the withering doubt the Circassians have so long endured would be finally put an end to. Now that it is equally nugatory to expect that another individual may soon be found generous enough to make the Circassians an offer similar to that of Nadir Bey, or that they themselves can be induced, in the absence of any provision in the country for public purposes so new to them, to make contributions for an object the good of which will, we fear, become to them, on the receipt of those letters from Sefir Bey, exceedingly problematical, we can only hope that such an embassy has become unnecessary through what may have been already effected in England for the cause of Circassia, by those who are in this respect in advance of their countrymen, by conviction as to its vast importance to the well-being of Turkey, of Persia, and of the British empire and influence in the East.

LETTER XVII.

WEAKENING OF THE ARISTOCRACY IN CIRCASSIA—CONJECTURES REGARDING THE ORIGIN OF THE CIRCASSIANS — SERFS, OR PSHILT — THFOKOTL, OR FREEMEN — PSHE, OR PRINCES — VORK, OR NOBLEMEN — DEPARTURE OF NADIR BEY — MORE RUSSIAN AGGRESSION.

SEMEZ, 1*st March*, 1838.

MY DEAR ——. M. Klaproth in his "tableau du Caucase" makes the number of houses in these two provinces—the approximate exactness of which he thinks he may guarantee as taken "de pièces authentiques"—to be only 15,350; which, at his calculation of nine persons to two houses, would give a total of only 69,075. Now, as it was shown by my last letter, that on a brief notice of three to four days —circulated through, certainly, not above one-third of the province of Notwhátsh, and only on the border of Shapsuk, which is by much the more populous of the two—from 4000 to 5000 volunteer warriors assembled, a shrewd inference may be drawn as to the dependence to be placed upon the "*pièces authentiques*," from which our author drew his estimate of the Caucasian populations*.

Here, as elsewhere, the revolution which has taken place in the system of warfare, attendant upon the introduction of commerce, has contributed to produce a revolution in the grades of society. The coat

* His *tableau* will however be found in the Appendix, as it is the only one of the Caucasian populations I know of.

of mail, helmet, and bow, with which the Circassian prince or noble was formerly armed, even although permitted to be worn by the common people (as it is said they were not), were articles of too great value to be in general use, for none of them were manufactured in this country. Many of these coats of mail were musket-proof, and, when fire-arms were little used, one brave and strong individual must have been himself a host. His protection must therefore have been courted by all in his immediate neighbourhood who were not entitled, or had not the means, to be armed as he was. But the two causes I have mentioned have contributed to change all this. The coat of mail which was worth from ten up to two hundred oxen, according to quality, can now be bought for less than half its former value (as it has been found not to be cannon-proof); the bow has been found to be a much less efficient and more costly weapon than the rifle or pistol; one or either or both of which, are now possessed by almost every shepherd-boy. Many of the tokavs, and even of the serfs, have become by trade (to be engaged in which is generally considered degrading for the other two classes) much richer than most of the nobles and princes, and therefore capable of providing means to protect themselves. To these causes of the declining influence of the aristocracy has, however, to be added —at least in the provinces which are most under Turkish influence—one of still greater efficacy, to which I have already more than once alluded; viz. the advocacy by the Turks of an entire equality, as founded on the principles of the Koran, that all men

are equal in the sight of God. At this principle, so far as regards the distribution of justice between man and man, no one can cavil; but, be it prejudice or not, I cannot avoid regretting the gradual process of assimilation that is now going on, and which must eventually obliterate all traces of those whom the consciousness of a pure and ancient descent from the chivalrous Saracens made the conservators of a higher tone of feeling, and greater delicacy of manners, than are generally prevalent.

If the country should become annexed to Turkey, or remain independent as hitherto under her influence, this process must then go on rapidly,—not probably by the direct interference of the sultan or his pashas, so much as by the nourishment that will be given to the idea of equality that is already widely disseminated among the people. But if, on the other hand, it shall become a province of Russia, another and totally different process will commence; the power and influence of the nobles will then be revived, but their ancient basis—the respect of the people, as well as the birth-right of antique descent—will (for the process is at work in Russia) be gradually destroyed; and the good-will of the Emperor, as evinced by the military rank he may confer, will become the substitute; and some future traveller will probably find in the manners of the Circassian noble, that the dignified composure and simple elegance which now characterise him have become replaced by military arrogance and awkward imitation of European fashion. But if such he find the alteration in the condition and manners of the

prince and noble, what will be that in those of the class beneath him? "the successors," as is said in an eloquent address from Daûd Bey to the Circassians, which we have just received—"the successors of a free inheritance of 5000 years?" who will find themselves, at once and irrevocably, deprived of that inestimable benefit on which they now so much pride themselves; forced to fight the battles of Russia against their co-religionists, and to conform their trade to her tariff and commercial capabilities; by which they will find that they are obliged to give their most valuable products for her bad manufactures, and that all vent for their more ordinary articles, which compete with her own, has been closed. In short, she will enact here what she does in Georgia and the provinces between it and the Black Sea —the fable of the dog in the manger; for she has as yet no means for developing commerce, and foreigners who have, will not come to trade in these provinces under her protection, as it will only ensure to them the inveterate hatred of the natives. Such must be the state of affairs for a long period—eventually other fruits of her designs may be developed, if she be allowed to bring them to maturity. The Turks, and other people of the East, in their ancient traditions, speak always of Constantine as Emperor of Constantinople, as if that monarch had had an antediluvian duration of life: it would be more excusable in them to speak of Peter the Great (great in nothing that I know of but his energy in physical achievements) as still Emperor of Russia; for his spirit still directs her councils, and brings to maturity his pro-

jects, with a perseverance and unity of purpose truly miraculous.

With relation to the story I formerly repeated to you, about the descent of the Circassians from the princes of Arabia, I find that Count Potoski had a similar tradition narrated to him forty years ago, in regard to the ancestry of the princes of Kabarda, whose genealogical tree he took the trouble to trace thence. It appears to me there must be some truth in an opinion so generally received, and that any error in the tale must consist in ascribing the people, instead of the princes only, to this source; for there is no affinity between the languages of the two countries. In fact, great difficulty must ever be found in the way of any one who wishes to study this people philosophically, from the impenetrable cloud that conceals its descent as well as its earlier history (the conduct of the boy which forms often the best key to that of the man), and which will prevent him from accounting for many anomalies that must appear in their institutions, manners, prejudices, and ruling passions; in short, in their national character. And this difficulty will be found attended by another almost equal to it—that of ascertaining precisely the tone of feeling and modes of thought of the people through the foreign language—foreign to both—in which conversation must be held; for I presume it will be long before an individual capable of that study will be found who is at the same time disposed to remain sufficiently long among the people to master entirely their own uncouth tongue.

The same observations apply to all the other ancient Caucasian populations, with the exception of the Ossetes and the Georgians, the former of whom are pretty well ascertained to have been a colony of Medes, and the latter have always been known to history, and possess ancient although somewhat fabulous written chronicles. Amid the Lesghis, the Mitsjeghis, the Adighes, Azras, &c., our philosopher must wander in conjecture, and often be as much at a loss to account for the origin of some general institution or prejudice, as a savage would be to account for the giant ruins of an aqueduct.

The habit of regarding the soil as the property of all, must I should think be looked upon as one of the prime causes of much that may be found most peculiar in the institutions of the Circassians. From this it may also be inferred that the remote ancestors of the people were freeborn nomades of plains, who preferred the nurture of flocks and herds to the fixed occupation of agriculture, which has in all probability been introduced among them at a comparatively recent period. Thus we find that the laws with regard to the payment of fines for crimes, and many other transactions between individuals, make the standard of payment so many head of oxen, for which other articles may be substituted by mutual agreement.

Whether the serfs are descendants of prisoners taken in war, or of the primitive inhabitants of the country conquered and enslaved by the others, I find it impossible to discover. Here in the north they are much outnumbered by the free population, which

seems to lead to the former conclusion; while from Vardan southward the reverse is the case. Wealth is estimated in the latter district according to the number of serfs possessed by an individual, while northward it depends on the amount of herds and flocks. Upon the whole, I am led to conclude, in regard to this north-western portion of the country, that as it is known to be peopled by a mixed breed, and that the Kabardan Circassians were the invaders after having long resided in the Crimea, the present race of serfs may be descended from a conquered portion of the aborigines. This opinion seems further corroborated by the circumstances of its dialect differing considerably from that of Kabarda, the seat of the pure Circassian race, and of the serfs being more numerous in those parts which lie at a distance from the richer country towards the Kûban, from which it is probable that the conquerors drove the original occupants.

Klaproth has been misinformed as to the Thfokotls being serfs*; all agree they never were such; although it is admitted that the Pshes (princes) and Vorks (nobles) formerly possessed more power, and that each sept of the latter had a sept of the Thfokotls attached, and in some degree subservient to it. Almost the only trace of this former power that now remains here consists, as I said, in certain usages of courtesy. Titles are never used even in addressing Pshes: their own servants sometimes use "Zuishan," a term of endearment used by an atalik to his *pro-*

* The Circassian word for a serf is "Pshilt."

tégé. In a national assembly the descendants of Khans seat themselves on the ground first, then the Pshes, then the Vorks, and lastly the Thfokotls. Those of inferior rank always remain standing until all their superiors have set them the example of being seated.

A man and woman deserted from Anapa the other day; their captors wished to dispose of them separately, when they represented themselves as man and wife, and it was consequently determined that they should not be separated. What a pleasing contrast this treatment by the Circassians, of *Ghiaour* enemies, affords to a disgusting scene I witnessed two years and-a-half since in Christian Charleston, where a brute of an auctioneer exercised all the wit he possessed to turn to ridicule the tears and entreaties of a black slave-girl, in order that the spectators might bid for her apart from her mother, and thus at a higher rate.

Towards the end of last month the Russians made a sortie from Abûn, and captured some cattle and sheep. Such an enterprise on the part of the garrison of any of these smaller forts is new, and must, I think, be occasioned by want of provisions among the soldiers, or the over-confidence and exposure of their stock on the part of the neighbouring Circassians. The Russian garrisons of the two new forts of Pshat and Tshopsin are so hemmed in by their neighbours that they may be called prisoners-at-war: water they have from the rivers at their feet; for everything else—even firewood—they are dependent upon the supplies that may be brought them by sea.

One of these prisoners of the latter fort, desirous of more liberty, or wishing to reconnoitre the precincts, procured a complete Circassian dress; but with egregious want of cunning, he had it garnished with too much silver lace, and he carried, moreover, his pistol in his hand, instead of sticking it in his belt. These peculiarities were sufficient to attract the attention of some of the numerous scouts who are always on the watch around the forts to catch deserters or pick off stragglers. Two of them watched this adventurous wight; but although soon convinced that he was "a wolf in sheepskin," they wished, if possible, to take him alive, and therefore waited till they should get near enough to him, when one of them, with a stick, adroitly struck the pistol out of his hand, and both pinioned him, before he could betake himself to other defence. The common salutation, "Wasshaff-shi," which he had used in passing these men, was all the Circassian he had learned for his feat.

Shamuz was absent several days and nights, in consequence of his being anxiously engaged, with a great many others, in the trial of a youth of this valley, who had become an adroit thief, and rendered it necessary to arrest his career. Our reverend and active konak* has, since the completion of this business, gone to the coast between Ghelenjík and Pshat with our countryman, whom he purposes to attend till the vessel he is to sail in get a fair wind. As neither of us who remain have the ambition of a

* Bizim is the Circassian word for a host and protector.

Cæsar, this departure of one of our triumvirate is felt as a great privation: for the youthful and buoyant spirit of Nadir Bey had contributed much to sustain ours, which began to flag; while his liberality (our resources having also begun to flag) contributed equally to revive that character for our party. We have little fear as to his getting safely away, even from between two forts; for their garrisons dare not venture out to burn the vessel, and accidents are seldom occasioned by the cruisers to vessels *leaving* the coast.

As to that of Sefir Bey burned lately at Anapa, (whose garrison be it remembered is always numerous,) it would have been unaccountable if she had been suffered to depart. Her Turkish captain was entirely ignorant of the coast, and was making his way directly towards Anapa, when some Circassians on the shore made signs for him to stop. But he was already opposite the glen of the Sûkwa, within five miles of the fortress, and there they had the hardihood to haul the vessel on shore and allow her to remain. A little way to the south, she would have been in perfect safety, unless a very large force had been employed against her—so much for the prevention of trade by means of these forts! A Polish deserter from Taman, whom I have just seen, reports that the Russians during the sortie had twenty men killed and about as many wounded. He reports also that a reinforcement and new governor have been sent to Anapa; that a large force had arrived at Taman, and that a very hot campaign may be expected by the Circassians. He heard that a great army, said

to be headed by the Englishmen, had intended crossing the Kûban, in consequence of which a strong Russian force was prepared to encounter it.

5th.—A great deal of cannon-firing having been heard here for several days past, both in the direction of Anapa and from the south, it would appear that the blockading squadron is busy—in transport service probably, for we have not heard of any captures; and the firing therefore was most likely occasioned by salutes.

12th.—A servant whom Nadir Bey sent to Constantinople to bring a ship to take him hence, arrived here yesterday and brought me letters of such an encouraging purport as to the trade of the coast being speedily thrown open to British enterprise under the protection of Government, that I have abandoned the idea I began to entertain of going to Constantinople for the purpose of more easy correspondence with London, and shall now await for some time longer the fulfilment of the expectations held out. I ardently hope they may be well based and speedily realised, as every reaction comes now to tell against us with increasing severity; and, if more occur, our situation must soon become exceedingly embarrassing.

Nadir Bey set sail on the evening of the 8th, with a fair breeze; but his intended departure had probably been heard of by the enemy, one of whose cruisers shortly before approached the place where the Turkish ship lay beached, apparently for the purpose of burning or otherwise destroying her. Our lively countryman and a large Circassian force were speedily ranged along the shore for her defence;

and the Russians, seeing such alacrity of preparation, after firing a few long shots, sheered off. On the evening of Nadir Bey's departure, another great assemblage of the neighbours took place; and after they had launched his ship, with uplifted hands they simultaneously uttered a prayer for the safety of her voyage. Shamuz and others remained on the hill-side till late in the evening, watching the wind, and eagerly listening lest any cannon-reports might announce the enemy having fallen in with the little Turkish craft, which had old Shamuz been classical he would probably have apostrophised in the ardent words of Horace; "Navis quæ tibi creditum debes," &c.; for, in sober earnest, he has declared that he loves him as his own son; and if an enthusiasm in the cause of this country, such as neither danger nor privations can appal, deserve such return of feeling on the part of Circassians, Nadir Bey has already earned it. Yet in proportion as his arrival and stay here contributed to enliven us, has his departure—for the land and scenes our longings for which we had so far suppressed—tended to depress us, and render us impatient at the tedious growth, if indeed there be yet any, of English interest in the affairs of this country. But if it exist and shall eventually reach the maturity of action, we shall then have a truly rich reward in witnessing the joyful acclamations of a people rescued from degradation and misery; and as Captain Hall (a critique on whose last (?) lively book I have just been reading) and his whole family remained so long in seclusion at Schloss Hainfeld, for the purpose of laying the old and decrepit

Countess in her grave, how much more urgently are we called upon to make ten times greater sacrifices, if they can at all contribute, to prevent the noble and vigorous Circassia from being brought prematurely to hers! And the 'Destroyer' yearly multiplies his efforts to bring about that consummation; for unsatiated by the sanguinary warfare he has so long waged against these provinces that have refused to make peace except on equitable terms, we heard, three days since, that a large force had suddenly entered the provinces eastward on the Kûban, which have for years been at peace with Russia, but which it would seem it is now wished to drive to the extremities of warfare or of abject submission; for they are required, as we learn, to furnish returns of the population, &c., as if they already belonged to Russia.

15*th*.—It has already become generally known that we have received letters from England, and among the many who have come to learn the news they contain, are Mehmet Effendi and Ali-bí of Ozerek, who were chiefly instrumental in thwarting us in Shapsuk during winter, as I have told you before; but the personally aggravating portion of the affair the judge utterly denies, as well as all intention to give us any offence. He appears perfectly contrite, and as he has suffered in his health in his exertions in administering the oath during that sevère weather, and in his pocket for his indiscretion towards us, (which is undeniable,) by missing a considerable present which Nadir Bey had intended bestowing on him, we judged it best to forgive him, and even

add a present for the exertion he has used in translating the very eloquent address from Daûd Bey to the Circassians. This address has, as may be supposed, elicited great admiration from all who have yet heard it. Shamuz says, "it is evidently written by a man of a great mind, and who is fit to be the king of any country."

It is not out of place to quote here another remark of Shamuz:—"It is better to be a shepherd on these hills, than a Turkish general; because the latter is no more sure of his life than the sheep of the former"—as exemplifying a strong sense of the advantages of "the hollow tree, the crust of bread, and liberty;" for we have just learned by our letters, that the bowstring has been administered,—no doubt under the influence of the Russian ambassador,—to Fertiff Pasha, a stanch friend of the English interest. Although the would-be emperor of this country does not thus rid himself of those of his subjects who have incurred his displeasure, his sentence to the Siberian mines—a life without a ray of hope or enjoyment—is infinitely more frightful.

The only thing in the shape of newspapers we have seen for many a month, are some numbers of the Allgemeine Zeitung, humanely sent us from Constantinople; and among other gratifications they have yielded us—as tidings from a world we have been in a manner dead to—were the surprise and gratification of Mehmet Effendi, at hearing translated to him General Williamineff's letter to the Circassians, and their reply of May last. Nor has our gratification been small at having a proof thus

afforded to our friends here, that we have been the means of making their cause more known and felt for in Europe.

Some idea may be formed of the privations of the people during this protracted struggle, and of the precipitancy with which they catch at any idea of relief through the interposition of England, by the circumstance of their having just sent to inquire of us if they should sow their grain in the valley this spring.

19*th*.—A wealthy tokav and active warrior from the neighbourhood of Anapa, who is almost every night upon guard, with others, around the fortress, has just been to pay us a visit, in return for one we lately made him. He had been not long ago on a mission into the fortress about prisoners, when the governor desired him to deliver us his compliments, and inform us that he knew our residence, and should soon have the pleasure of entertaining us at his table, as he meant to send a boat for us with that view. This courteous message was not delivered to us till after our tokav friend had departed. He had told it apart to my dragoman, having been ashamed, as he said, to deliver such a message in our presence! The message it must be allowed is nevertheless a very good message, and shows the wit of the new governor.

Here are neither tailors, shoemakers, nor hatters, every man getting all articles of his dress made by his female relations or friends. In fact, the only tradesmen I have seen or heard of are silversmiths, who ornament urns, gun and sword-smiths, cart-wrights, and a few coopers. Each family builds its

own house or houses, the only furniture of which, beside some home-made benches and stools, are chests, mattresses, pillows, and coverlets, brought from Turkey, or home-made; mats from the banks of the Kûban, where the reed they are made of abounds, iron pots, small round tripod tables, or rather trays, and a few other articles. It may thus be easily conceived how slight a matter is the moving of any household upon an emergency.

A young tokav of this valley, who has just carried off his bride without the consent of her parents and a regular contract as to price, will be obliged to pay so much dearer for his "dearie;" viz.—two male and two female serfs, a coat of mail, a sword and pistol ornamented with silver, besides sheep and oxen to the value of nearly two hundred pounds; instead of which he would in the usual way have had to pay only about a half of this amount. In both cases, however, considerable time is given, often several years, to make up the payment.

I have been amused with an account of the zeal our handsome hostess has displayed for the conversion of my young handsome Georgian. She tells him that his religion is only for this world, but that he should think also of the next, to which he may be summoned in a day or an hour. But not trusting entirely to these eloquent appeals, she adds that if he become a Mussulman, he shall be as their son, shall live with them, have part of their heritage, and, above all, a beautiful young wife!—Let our fair supporters of missionary societies take the hint.

Yesterday we had a visit from the *mobocracy* of

this valley, whose self-estimation has had a forced growth by the beams of our presence having been so long shed upon it, and who came to demand of Shamuz why he had sent away one of the Englishmen without consulting them; why he was about to escort another to the south, without letting them know whether he also intended to depart the country; why he sent to places at a distance to communicate the news just arrived from England, and not to them; why, in short, he played the noble with them, and acted so unneighbourly as not to seek their advice in matters of such importance?—following up their interrogations with a threat of their displeasure, in case more deference were not paid them in future. Our wise old Bizim treated the whole affair with the good-humoured indifference such overweening folly deserved. With respect to the second of their questions, he likened me (who purpose going southward) to a bird perched on his finger, whose wings were free, and might be used to take it where it pleased.

When in the south, last year, I mentioned a sort of chamber of deputies being constituted in this portion of the country, and I have omitted hitherto to explain further about it. Twelve individuals were elected as a species of temporary government, and three were deputed to go to Constantinople to conduct matters there in concert with Sefir Bey, in accordance with recommendations from Daûd Bey. All these wise arrangements, however, were departed from upon my arrival, it having been considered as superseding any necessity for them. One deputy only—Hasesh—proceeded to Constantinople, and

the council of twelve discontinued its sittings, my countrymen and I having subsequently come to be considered as governors of the country *ad interim!*

A tokav, who formed, or affected to have, a strong attachment for Nadir Bey, and who has lost his horse in battle, has been going the round of his friends (among whom he inscribes us) to get contributions, according to a custom which prevails in the case of those who are not rich enough to buy another.

On the 9th, we heard here that Russia had commenced proceedings against the Kûban provinces which had for seven or eight years been at peace with her; but before chronicling so important an event, I thought it right to wait for confirmation and ampler details. These have now been received, and seem to exemplify a novel and bolder system on the part of Russia. In my letter of 21st December, I enumerated to you the provinces which had combined in the appointment of Sefir Bey as their ambassador, and in a general engagement with him against submission to Russia. Such of them as lie on the Kûban, to the eastward of Shapsuk, are composed either of plains or of undulating country of great richness and beauty, which, being easily practicable for military operations, and the inhabitants being congregated in large villages, they are thus in a very inferior condition for offering resistance to the enemy; and they present easy opportunities for his gaining rapid and decided advantages as compared with their neighbours, who have mountains for resistance and refuge and no villages. For these reasons they had found themselves under the necessity of coming to terms of

mutual forbearance with Russia, which they empowered Hatukwoï-okû Jambolet Bey to conclude. So far as we have been able to learn, this treaty has remained unviolated on their part; as was proved by the incident I mentioned, of the people of Abazak having obliged some individuals, who had driven the cattle they had taken in a foray into Russia across the territory of Psadûg, to restore them, lest this circumstance might be considered as a breach of the contract in which the latter province was bound.

Psadûg, Hatukwoï, and Temigui, are the provinces against which it is supposed proceedings are at present chiefly to be taken. General Sass is now in Hatukwoï—the least extensive of the three—which he entered suddenly with a large force, to the infinite consternation of its inhabitants, who knew of no cause why the treaty of peace they had entered into should be broken. A meeting of the chiefs and elders was therefore called, for the purpose of demanding an explanation from the Russian general; when he coolly replied that that treaty was at an end, the chief who had made it on their part being dead (!)—that they must thenceforth consider themselves as Russian subjects; must furnish him with returns of population; and abstain from trade and all other intercourse with the Abazaks, &c. He has also *nominated* one of their chiefs governor, to carry into execution these imperial mandates. I have not yet heard who this functionary is; but he may, if his pride so tend, boast of being the first whom Russia has attempted to nominate in a country, which for ten years past she has

presumptuously placed in her maps, and proclaimed to Europe as a province of her empire.

If one dare indulge in a smile where "angels weep," the "fantastic tricks" of this double-faced power were enough to provoke it. Towards Europe she endeavours to wear an aspect of justice and magnanimity—towards Asia her features betray rapacity, treachery, and cruelty, such as, it will be further seen, the instance in question exemplifies; and many of a similar nature might doubtless be gathered on her remoter frontiers, where the public opinion of Europe, which she strives so sedulously to conciliate—if not by her acts, at least by her glosses of them—cannot be affected; nor where even that of Russia, such as it is, can penetrate to check functionaries in the means they adopt to merit imperial favour, by accomplishing what they know to be desired by their government.

Jambolet Bey, who was a relation of Sefir Bey, although on a similar footing with the other independent chiefs of these provinces, is said to have possessed more influence and power than any of them, not only on account of his zeal for the welfare of these provinces, but also on account of his energy and integrity of character, which induced him to see scrupulously to the observance of the treaty with Russia, and, at the same time, to prevent all approximation to her treacherous friendship. His two nearest male relatives had been cut off by her means; yet, in the confidence of a generous spirit, he went into her territory about a year since, attended by only one servant, to demand of this General Sass an heir-loom, an ancient gun, on which he set value, and which the

general had captured at the house of his konak in one of the belligerent provinces of the neighbourhood. It is said that during this interview an altercation occurred between the two, the general reproaching the bey with having broken the treaty with Russia, by fighting against her in disguise, which the latter indignantly denied. He set out for his house, but was waylaid in a defile in a forest, just as he had entered his own province, by a Noghaï and some Cossacks, shot at, and mortally wounded. He survived one day; and, with a prophetic vision of what has since occurred, with his dying breath he desired that his son might be sent, for safety, into Abazak. In this dark foreboding others, no doubt, participated; but the circumstances of the murder, or at all events the power of the perpetrators, or of their protectors, rendered retribution impracticable; yet to abate (as is supposed) the general outcry it occasioned, Sass was recalled to St. Petersburgh, and there (as it may further be supposed) he assigned such reasons—either retro- or pro-spective—why he should not be punished for the crime which had been committed under his command, that he was soon restored to it.

It is said that one chief purpose for which the enumeration of the population in these Kûban provinces is urged, is to ascertain, as nearly as possible, the quantities of salt and other goods they may require for their own consumption; beyond which all supplies are to be withheld from them, lest they should send the surplus into Abazak, and the other mountain provinces to the south. To force these provinces to

come to terms by such means, and a strict blockade of the coast, appears to be one great object with Russia at present.

But there is another danger to be provided for; viz. that of the inhabitants of the provinces in question, who are generally considered faithful Mussulmans and true Circassians, being driven to such extremities as to seek refuge among their mountain neighbours to the south. For the purpose, it is presumed, of cutting off such retreat from Temiguï, Sass—the Bayard of the sycophants of imperialism on the lower Elbe—some time since made overtures to the people of Shageraï, a mountain district to the south of the former; but they very wisely, instead of believing in the friendship which Russia then professed for them, immediately placed a guard upon their frontier; and it proved well they had done so, for Sass soon after suddenly appeared there with a body of troops, when a noble of the fraternity of Meisham, who happened to be on guard, instantly attacked them, and with a very few coadjutors kept up a running fight, until his countrymen caught the alarm. He soon fell, and the Russians decapitated him, in accordance with a practice they have lately adopted of mutilating the bodies that fall into their power, either for the purpose of outraging the feelings for their dead generally entertained by the Circassians, or to make more of them quit the field in bearing off the bodies of those that fall, to prevent this outrage; but his heroic, his Thermoplyæan resistance, had given time for his countrymen to assemble, and repulse the invaders with considerable slaughter. Sass and his freebooters

were, however, subsequently more successful in a foray they made upon the banks of the Shagwashe in Abazak, which district he effectually surprised, carrying off some hundred head of cattle and sheep, and twelve of the unfortunate shepherds.

The people of Psadûg having for some time foreseen the storm that now so nearly threatens them, (as the letter from Hatukwoï I sent you in the summer proves their neighbours also did,) provided for it to the best of their power by bespeaking a refuge among the mountains of Abazak, if they should be driven to the alternative of flying from their homes. This refuge was readily promised formerly; and on the present occasion, when the danger so imminently presses, the reply of the Abazaks—as we learn from one who was present when the messengers were despatched—was proportionally generous and consolatory. It was to this effect:—"As our religion is the same, so shall we share with you, as brothers, our homes, and all that we possess." In order further to encourage their brethren in rejecting submission to the common enemy, they offered to place hostages in their hands for the fulfilment of this promise

LETTER XVIII.

JOURNEY TO THE SOUTH — ANCIENT FORTRESS— EXTRAORDINARY CONDUCT OF SHAMUZ — WINE — LANGUAGES SPOKEN ON THE COAST — A CONGRESS IN THE SOUTH.

PSID, *March 29th*, 1838.

MY DEAR ——. On the 24th inst. I set out, accompanied by Shamuz and others, on a journey to Khissa, which I have undertaken for the purpose (among others) of holding a congress in the south, and of having the letter of Daûd Bey read to the assembly.

On the hills between the bay of Doba, and the entrance to that of Semez, or Sûgûljak, as it is called by the Circassians, I alighted for the purpose of comparing the localities on the spot with the copy of the Russian admiralty chart, given in the Portfolio. I found it almost as correct as could be expected on such a scale, and even according to it, it cannot possibly be inferred that the bays of Sûgûljak and Doba are only one. Doba, which is so called by the natives, is that small bay to the N.W. of Ghelenjík: at its S.E. corner, was constructed in 1836, the small fort which the Russians call Alexandrinski. This can by no just construction be called the "military occupation" of the bay of Sûgûljak, to which the Russians lay claim; for the cannons of the fort are too remote to prevent a vessel passing the smaller bay for the purpose of entering the other, and without

such command of the waters of the bay, where is the test of maritime right through "military occupation?" A Russian soldier, moreover, has never ventured to set foot in the district of Semez (which extends from Doba, all around the larger bay) for during the time—now almost an entire year—that we have lived in that district, we have taken our daily walks and rides over every or any part of it. And be it further remarked, that all that Russia—through political knavery, which has not yet been generally understood—made the Sultan cede to her, was the spot on which stood formerly the fort called Sûjûk-kaleh, (on the western side of the bay of Sûgûljak,) which spot has remained totally unoccupied by the Russians. I trust, therefore, that the capture of the Vixen in this bay of Sûgûljak may still be publicly proved—as a patient examination of the treaties and all the circumstances connected with it must show it to have been—an *unwarrantable violence*, for which reparation must be made. Besides the national degradation of submitting to such wrong, it will be found that the apologists of Russia have been endeavouring to establish an exclusive right for her over the most valuable locality for commerce on the whole coast; as it is the only one that offers at once refuge for shipping, and a practicable line of communication with the rich valleys on the Kûban.

While I was putting up my chart, a shabbily dressed old man, who with others was tending a large flock of goats and sheep, came and begged I would lodge with him for the night, as it was too late (it was only 3 P.M.) to proceed farther,—adding

that he would gladly kill a couple of sheep for our entertainment, as he had abundance. But I was obliged to decline this hospitable invitation, as Shamuz had gone on before to provide quarters, and expected me on the other side of the hill. On arriving there, I found our konak divested of his silver-laced coat, and clad in an old grey one, unadorned. The reason assigned for the change was, that it is contrary to custom to wear the same coat more than four months, when it must be exchanged or replaced by a new one.

I have heard of eight Turkish vessels having arrived this season, four of which have already departed with cargoes.

Between Pshat and Tshopsin there are two long, rich, and beautiful vales; but between these the road passes through a series of such steep and difficult defiles that a Russian army, opposed by a fourth or a fifth of its number of resolute men, properly posted, would I think be unable to force a passage.

After having passed the two larger streams which form the river Tshopsin (one of the largest on the northern part of the coast) we passed over some hills, on emerging from which I caught a view of the sea at the termination of the small valley we had entered into, and was busy inspecting the objects at its extremity to see if I could discover in any of them the semblance of the fort constructed here last year by the Russians, when having failed in my endeavour, I asked Nadir Bey's servant, who rode by my side, where it lay. "There it is," replied he; and there sure enough it was, not half a cannon-shot from where we were, nearer the sea,

on the end of a long ridge to our right, while the base of a hill to our left made it necessary that we should advance still more within the range of the guns before we could strike off into a valley to the eastward. To "return would have been as bad then as go o'er;" so I said nothing, but rode on quietly, like the rest, except Shamuz, who, with the experienced eye of an old warrior, at once saw what was best, and set the example by dashing across the valley to the shelter of a hill on its other side. He had not been here since the fort was erected, otherwise he would have chosen, I presume, a less hazardous path for his *protégé* The rest had entered the valley at the former pace, and I had just desired one of my servants to get out my telescope, thinking we were far enough off to admit of our surveying the fort leisurely, to see what some soldiers outside the wall were engaged in, when another cried, "Move on, they are going to fire." Immediately an explosion announced the first shot, which passed over Shamuz's head, a second splashed in the stream between us, and a third made a superb "geyser" of mud at the distance of a few paces on the line between me and the fort. This set most of our horses capering, and made us all move further up the valley, each according to his *lumières* in the way he thought safest.

All yesterday it rained hard, and kept me storm-staid; but much cannon having been heard, and, according to the report of a man from the hills above this hamlet, musket-firing also, I started soon after daybreak for Tshopsin, where I found that the Circassians had invented a novel amusement of station-

ing themselves with a couple of small cannons on a hill above the fort, and firing into it.

On each side of the valley the hills are pretty high and steep; and within cannon-shot of its centre, there is a ridge which extends nearly to the sea,—at its termination stands the fort. Its ramparts are of earth, and of considerable extent, covering in their oblong square form the whole breadth of the ridge. Bastions are constructed at the centres and corners of each of the walls. But the ridge increases in height as it recedes from the sea, so as to command the fort entirely; and as it is undulating and intersected with ravines, parties of Circassians had stationed themselves where they found complete shelter from the guns of the fort, within even half a musket-shot from it. There they lay on the watch for any Russian who might show himself at the embrasures, while many, regardless of exposure, perambulated the precincts of the fort on the level ground around it, and also within musket-shot; so that during the whole time I was on the ground, there was a continual popping of musketry from the numerous loop-holes on the top of the walls at these adventurous individuals, while a thundering gun or bomb was discharged at other parties more remote, as they debouched from the shelter of one hill to cross to that of another. The expectation of the Circassians I believe to have been, that their guns, small as they were, would have forced the Russians to have evacuated their fort and fight them in the valley, of which, as I saw no chance, I soon left the field; yet quite convinced of the facility with which the fort might

be carried by surprise during night, or the Russians forced to abandon it as well as that of Pshat, which is also commanded by hills on each side—if the Circassians set rightly about it, or possessed a small portion of the needful *matériel.* None of the garrison dare forage even for wood—with which they are supplied by sea—nor venture beyond half cannon-range for water; and the same I believe will be found to be the case with the garrisons of all other forts that may hereafter be constructed anywhere but on the valleys near the Kûban.

In this *siege* of Tshopsin, the casualties among the Russians were, I presume, but few, as they appeared to avoid all exposure. On our side there were of course a good many, one person having had his jaw carried away; a noble being killed; and the second youngest Zazi-okû (to which family the field-pieces belong) having had both legs wounded by the splinter of a shell.

I mentioned in my letter of September last, that some persons towards Tshopsin had been accused of having sold four deserters to the Russians. Their innocence, however, has been proved by the mission of a person into Abazak, who found that the deserters had been sold there, where the article is scarcer and the market price proportionably higher.

The varieties of shade in religion, and of manners —upon which it has everywhere such influence—I find to be considerable, according to the localities. To a considerable distance around Anapa, and along the Kûban, where the former Turkish inhabitants of the fortress chiefly traded, their influence and ex-

ample have tended to give a supremacy and purity to the profession of Mohammedism; while from Ghelenjík to about Waia, and for some distance inland, there is mingled with that faith a strong tincture of Christian observances: Lent, Easter (with its dyed eggs), and carnival, being all to be traced amid the rude rites practised at their respective periods of the year. In the valley of Tshopsin we overtook a large body of men and lads, on horse and foot, departing from one of these celebrations. From Waïa to Sûtsha, where there always has been much Turkish trade, Mohammedism is again more prevalent, and instances are to be found there of its having triumphed over the distinction of rank, so firmly adhered to elsewhere, in cases of marriage—as, for example, that of a wealthy tokav at Shimtoatsh, married to the daughter of a Pshe or prince. The ancient custom, however, of drinking wine has kept its footing among a large portion of the inhabitants of these parts, and will, I presume, long continue to do so, notwithstanding the reproach of infidelity it entails—habits being stronger than precepts. Southward of Sûtsha there are again traces of Christianity; while, towards the high mountains inland, many *are said* to live apparently regardless of all religion.

Nejagub, 31*st*.—We stopped here early to-day to bargain for a large Russian boat that lay on the beach hard by, to carry some of us and our luggage to Khissa. This boat had been cut from the stern of a transport that lay in the bay of Ghelenjík; for which purpose a Circassian youth of fifteen years of

age swam into the bay at night, and brought off the boat alone. I had observed him last year on the beach of Shapsekwa, where he had just landed on his arrival from Turkey (after a dangerous chase, in which the vessel he was in got bilged), and I was struck by the modesty and native grace with which he received the caresses of his friends. "Immaturely brave," as we may again say, he fell soon after at Tshopsin, and the Russians, according to their newly-adopted barbarity, cut off his head.

Nibû, April 1st.—Yesterday we crossed the mouths of the Shapsekwa, Neghipsekwa, and Tû, which, with the Nibû, are all inconsiderable streams, but all deep enough to admit of small Turkish vessels of twenty to thirty tons being drawn over the beach into their embouchures, where, with branches on their masts to make them resemble trees, they lie almost entirely secure from discovery by the Russian cruisers. Tû, of all these, has the best anchorage near the shore.

The ancient propensities of the natives are not yet quite eradicated; for four months ago a Turkish vessel was plundered here of goods to the amount of thirty purses (one hundred and fifty pounds) by a large body of the neighbours of the konak of the captain, on the plea of their being at feud with him. The captain is here at present, and expects to obtain reimbursement of nearly the whole. Shamuz spent great part of last night in this affair, having convoked the persons of influence, and told them that the houses of the offenders shall be burned unless they make restitution.

At Pshat the walnut-trees commence, and are to be seen as we advance southward in every valley. There are a great many in this pretty little glen, and a sauce is made here from the nut, to be used with boiled meat or in stews, which appears a decided improvement, and might be found to answer with fish also. Let Burgess take the hint. By-the-bye, in passing along the shore yesterday, some of our party, who were bathing their horses in the sea, got among a very large shoal of fish about the size of large haddocks; a large dog-fish also lay stranded. This whole coast is said to abound with fish, which would form a great resource for the inhabitants (if they could betake themselves to it with security), but chiefly as an article of export (dried or salted) for Constantinople; for they seem to have a disinclination to the use of fish.

Our host here is a young noble of the Karzek fraternity, named Yedig, whose sister is said to be the *belle* of all the country round; and I can believe it, judging from his very handsome and expressive features and tall graceful figure.

Shepse, 2nd April.—Our handsome young host came with us this morning but a little way from the end of his valley, it not being safe for him to come further, as one of his fraternity had lately killed a man of Agûïa, the district to the south, and the affair has not yet been settled. But I must mention the circumstances as somewhat characteristic of this state of society. The tokav who was killed was exceedingly wealthy, and had increased his means by getting the Turkish merchants to sojourn with him.

This occasioned envy among his neighbours, particularly those of them who belonged to the Karzek family; and upon some occasion the tokav had addressed such cutting reproaches to his competitors for influence that the mother stimulated one of her sons to seek vengeance for the disgrace. He went accordingly to the hamlet of the tokav, and shot him while reclining on his divan. The latter survived a short time, and begged that his fraternity would not compound for his murder, but demand blood for blood. The Karzeks have offered to pay the established fine, two hundred oxen, or allow punishment to be inflicted on the offender; but they say that if any other individual of their fraternity be killed, they will retaliate: and thus the affair remains suspended, for the criminal and his family have taken refuge in Abazak.

The notable rivers or streams, whose mouths we have passed to-day, are the Agûïa and Toapse. The former is nearly in the latitude in which Major Rennel places Achaïa vetus; and Agûïa appears a much less transformation than usually takes place in such a lapse of time, and in such difference of language as there is between Greek and Circassian. As I gazed over the beautiful valley with its stately trees, among which the walnut preponderated, and its picturesque enclosure of wooded mountains, I could not help regretting that some graceful Grecian structures did not still exist there, to contrast with the grander beauties of nature. But not a vestige is to be seen, nor, so far as I could learn, to be found. On a height at the side of the valley a fortress is recorded to have stood, but even its ruins are now

obliterated. The depth of water close to the land at this place would admit vessels of considerable draught to trade here.

In this respect, however, Toapse has even greater advantages, for Russian frigates have there approached to within rifle-range of the land, the anchorage is said to be excellent, and the bay forms a considerable indenture between two high head-lands. The neighbourhood, moreover, is rich and populous, the distance from Abazak but eight or nine hours, the valley large and fertile, and the stream of water that intersects it among the largest on the coast. But alas for Toapse! the Russians have come to hear of its advantages, and I was told to-day, by a person who says he obtained his information from themselves, that it is their intention to have a dock here, and a ship-building establishment, for which the hills around appear to possess abundant timber, and more may be floated from the interior (where it is of very large growth) at the proper season. As yet, however, I am happy to say, they are so far from the accomplishment of their object, that, with all their cannon and marines, they were lately beaten back in an attempt to burn a small Turkish vessel that had been hauled over the beach. On the highest part of the sea-shore the Circassians had constructed a breast-work of hurdle filled with shingle; behind this they lay secure in a trench while the bombarding continued, and when the boats approached they poured upon them so deadly a fire that the enemy was forced to retire. It is thought however, that an attack on a larger scale, and for the purpose of erecting a fort, will be attempted there, as

the place is much frequented by Turkish vessels, two of which (lately arrived) I found behind a bank high and dry, and their masts graced as usual with boughs of trees. But a fort there will be commanded by higher ground within cannon-range.

All the Turks and Circassians lately arrived speak of an unaccountable disappearance of Sefir Bey, and this has caused as much discouragement as his return to Constantinople and communications with the English ambassador had excited hope. How cruel are these alternations!

The Shepse is but a small stream at present; but its winter ravages have made a stony bed of the greater part of the bottom of its glen; yet, on each side, are some large rich meadows and much cultivation. We rode for an hour up the glen until we arrived at this the large and populous hamlet of *Tshukh** Kerim Gheri, where a spacious guest-house and blazing fire were our first consolations for six hours of a cold ride over that shingly sea-beach—the only highway, with occasional divergings over the hills—amid a gale of wind and rain.

This and all other peeps into the interior convince me how arduous is the task Russia has set herself in attempting the conquest of this country. This glen, for instance, soon dwindles to nothing but the rocky channel of the stream, with abrupt hills of all shapes and ruggedness narrowly enclosing it. The whole country I have passed is of the same general charac-

* When any one is specifically mentioned, the Circassians generally prefix the name of his fraternity to his own name. In such cases the name of the fraternity will be given in *Italics*.

ter. I have heard it affirmed over and over again, that if the people were but supplied with salt they could keep the Russians at bay for forty or fifty years, and I can believe it, for it comes to be a question of "the rule of three;" viz., if Russia have with such means as she has employed taken eleven years to conquer as far as Tshopsin, supposing this portion to be conquered, which it is not by any means; how long will she take to conquer the rest of Circassia, especially the interior of the country, where her ships cannot avail her?

Súkúkh, 4th April.—This morning, about half-past eight, we set out from Shepse, and the sea-beach still being our road, in about two hours we reached the glen of the Mokupse, where an entrenchment on the shore showed the resort of Turkish ships and the preparations made for defending them. Passing some smaller streams, in about four hours more we arrived at that of Waïa, which is large and rapid, and a good deal resorted to by Turkish vessels. What I took last year—as seen from a distance at sea, and in the ignorance I then had of all the streams on this coast—for the delta of a river I found now to be a flat tract of land, the only one I have seen on the coast, of about two miles long by half a mile broad, backed by hills, which increase in elevation until they become at some distance from the sea very lofty—that is, two to three thousand feet. This rich tract is parted into meadows, where Turkey-corn chiefly had been grown; but it seemed to have borne other grain, and perhaps a rich crop of grapes. Numerous standard trees—many of them walnut—are left throughout

the whole extent, and they are all festooned with enormous vines, the grapes of which my countrymen who tasted them last year pronounced excellent. On an eminence near the stream are extensive traces of a fortification, said, as usual, to have been Genoese. The ruins are now nearly level with the ground, and all overgrown. Within their circuit I saw a large throne of stone, and its footstool, but of the rudest workmanship, or weather-wasted to that appearance.

For an hour or two north and south of Waïa, the hills are almost bare of trees, and have a stony barren appearance; yet there are considerable patches of cultivation almost to their very summit.

At Waïa I saw the first and only instance I have met with in this country, of a person intoxicated; viz. the chief, a very old man, who has lately lost his wife, and, it is said, part of his intellect also in consequence. His breath, as he repeatedly clapped me on the head, smelt of spirits.

On leaving the beach to seek a night's lodging, we had to wander for some time among the forests of these hills, my escort being strangers, except Shamuz, who had parted to seek a separate one. At length we lighted on a hamlet fit to entertain us, or rather me, for whom superior accommodation is always sought by my conductors; viz. that of two hospitable tokavs, *Deghe* Osman and Omar. But we did not arrive at it till the sun had been for some time set; yet we were promptly welcomed, and I was much gratified by the ramble, which had afforded me most picturesque views of this rich and romantic-looking portion of the coast. The hills are high, multiform, and richly wooded;

and in the little dells and *plateaux* on their sides, numerous hamlets are perched, whose whitewashed houses, blossomed fruit-trees, and patches of bright green sward, give a pleasing contrast to the sombre forest-scenery around. The neatness of the numerous graveyards—many of them much ornamented and decked with shrubs—particularly struck me as evidence of a humane tone of feeling in the society of the neighbourhood.

But these hills afford another object of very different interest in the lofty, mouldering walls of an ancient fortress overhanging the sea, and called, as usual, Genoese, which perhaps in this case may be correct, ruin having but begun its work.

The rhododendrons, of which the woods here are full, are just beginning to blossom, and to perfume the air.

My lively young Pole, who has hitherto only been among the stricter Mussulmans to the north, was quite delighted at supper to-night by having a large glass of very tolerable white wine served him by our host after every two or three mouthfuls.

Khissa, 5th.—This morning a four hours' ride along the beach brought us to this rich, populous, and picturesque valley. About half way we passed the much larger valley of Sûbesh and its broad rapid stream; but my former accounts of this part of the coast may save me the further hackneying of epithets and description.

With some little difficulty I got my escort to diverge a little from the way at Sûkûkh, that I might get a view at leisure of the ruins of the fortress, which I found very considerable. Towards the sea there is a preci-

pice. The other three sides of an oblong square, of four to five English acres, are enclosed by a strongly built wall of stone and lime, about a yard and a half in thickness, and from twelve to fifteen or twenty feet high—according to the undulations of the ground—with towers and buttresses at the two landward corners. At the north-west corner toward the sea, a space of about a quarter of an acre is walled off from the larger one: on the northern side, *within* the wall of this smaller enclosure, is an oblong mass of ruins, while *in* the wall of the western side is the square base of what appears to have been a donjon-keep of very solid masonry. I thought the smaller enclosure might have been the citadel, and the larger one the mart.

If this large establishment was a Genoese factory-fort—as appears highly probable—it and others on the coast prove the importance that enterprising republic attached to the trade of this country, which must have then been—as regards its own exports—the same as it is, or rather might be made, at this day.

But this mart has now become a very picturesque vineyard, where, moreover, a large crop of Turkey-corn seemed to have been produced last year, and the tillage of this season was already begun.

Here I am lodged at the hamlet of a much respected Hadji, who is gone a second time on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and has taken his wife with him—a proof, so far, that (contrary to a prejudice not uncommon among us) there is some value set on the souls of females among Mussulmans. A mosk constructed by the Hadji is in the same enclosure as the guest-

house, and the hamlet is further graced by two most luxuriant weeping-willows, the first I have observed.

9*th*.—Yesterday I came two or three miles across the hills to this the hamlet of Hassan Bey, who as I have stated before carries on trade with Turkey in two or three vessels of his own, and is one of the richest persons in this part of the country, where his family, originally from Constantinople, has been established for about a century and a half. Hafiz Pasha is his eldest brother, and other two enjoy high military rank in the Turkish service. When Hassan was last in Turkey, he was strongly urged by his brothers to enter the same service, in which high grade and speedy promotion were promised him; but these brilliant offers could not turn him from his love of Circassian life and its native freedom. He has blended it however with much more luxury and indulgence than belong to it—in this part of the country at least. Of this luxury we have constantly examples; viz. tea and rich (buffalo) cream served morning and evening, and four mortal hours spent by him (after a noble and I have dined) at table with the rest of his guests, amid copious libations of wine and spirits, in the distribution of which the Ganymedes—an ugly Russian and two Circassian lads—employ their most winning looks to induce modest individuals to drink.

On my former visit to this part of the country, I had no idea of the extent to which wine abounds in it. The quantity of vines which I before observed in some valleys I now find in all the rest; and in several places I have seen new vineyards in training,

young standard trees having been planted (or left in cutting down others), and the lower branches lopped off, for the purpose of supporting the young vines set beside them. The whole country around is a "pays de bocages," and hilly besides—small conical and variously formed hills, such as make it quite impenetrable to any but the lightest artillery. The population seems to be as much as nourishment can well be got for, for it was with difficulty, till I came to Hassan Bey's, that I could get grain for our horses even at very high prices as compared with those of the north; and millet, the least desirable, was all I could get.

But I almost wonder I have patience for these minor subjects, as one of great interest to us strangers is preying upon my mind. Shamuz, our old konak, in favour of whom I have so often written strongly, declared a little time ago, in the presence of about a dozen people, that he considered me a spy, (!) that he would tear any letters I might write in future, and that if I would not return with him to Semez immediately, as he wished me to do, he would have me taken by force! The only cause he assigned for his suspicions were my writing so much, and having gone to see that ruined fortress at Sûkûkh; while all that we have done (for my countrymen, or Mr. L. at least I presume is classed with me)—all that we have suffered, to say nothing of all that we have given, seems in a moment lost sight of. Hassan Bey grew exceedingly angry, and told Shamuz he believed that what he had asserted was false, which his own conduct proved, in having had us for a year at his house, during all

which time not a word had been uttered of such suspicions. He added that at all events he would not suffer him to repeat such insults to a stranger in his house—that he might bring his force and see what he could do with it here—that he believed me a true friend of the country, and that therefore I should stay with him as long as I pleased, or go where I chose, and that he would accompany me. Several of the others joined in these reproaches, and they begged my dragoman not to repeat to me what had been said (in Circassian): but I had *seen*, and that was sufficient. Shamuz said his prayers soon after and departed, without my having addressed a word to him. In the evening he sent for my dragoman to come and see him next morning, and the former had then set out with a message for me, when both returned and gave me an opportunity of speaking to the old gentleman personally. I did so to this effect: that I had seen enough the day before to convince me that he had spoken against me, which I could not have believed on report, as I had always believed him an honest man; but that he must have spoken falsely either now or hitherto, while he had expressed such esteem and confidence in us; that his conduct, however, should make no change in mine, as he had no just cause to find fault with it; and that I should remain hereabouts until I had finished the affairs I came for, and then proceed to Semez to join my countryman. He replied mildly that "what was passed, was past;" and then begged me to let him know whether I intended returning with him or not, as he found he could not get his horse properly fed,

on account of the scarcity of grain, and must therefore set out immediately. I answered, "I shall do as I have already said," when he took Hassan out to the green and endeavoured to inoculate him with his suspicions, and to extract from him a promise to be responsible for me or my conduct—in neither of which objects has he succeeded, as I may presume from what passed having been communicated to me immediately. He endeavoured also to get Luca to desert me (saying it would be better for him in the end), and having been unsuccessful in this also he departed, after having vowed vengeance against a servant of Nadir Bey, who had bearded him in some measure; taken from him a small portion of a large quantity of powder given him by his master, and whom he had found not to be the sincere convert to his faith he had at first believed him to be.

Hassan Bey and others have endeavoured to make me think lightly of the whole affair—the former saying (in accordance with the suspicion I have formerly expressed), that he thinks Shamuz's mind somewhat debilitated. It remains to be seen, when I go northward, whether others think so; whether the great influence this old chief has hitherto enjoyed may make them adopt his views, or whether they be already generally diffused, from misconstruction put upon the great delay that has occurred—in which case prompt action from England can alone save us from a very awkward dilemma. For flight, even if possible, would damn the English name and the Circassian cause; and my seeking permanent refuge here in the south might warrant general suspicion,

and render Mr. L.'s situation very embarrassing. I see, therefore, no other way open for me but to return to Semez, so soon as I shall have accomplished my objects here, and face my accusers, whosoever they may be.

11*th*.—This morning a man brought back a letter I had given Shamuz to take to Mr. L. at Semez, with a message from him to this effect—that as we had differed, he could not take my letter. This, it seems to me, may be construed two ways; either that he is ashamed of what has passed and wishes it no further known, or that he wishes to keep Mr. L. alone in ignorance of it, lest he also should endeavour to escape, as I fancy he thinks I wish to do.

Last evening, while we were at dinner, the second worst of my four horses, which were all in the same stable, was stolen. Great search was made for it by my host and his servants, one of whom, a Pole, he put in irons on suspicion that he intended making off with it; but it seems to be since agreed among all here, that the thief must have been one of my escort*, to all of whom I refused any presents, on account of the conduct of Shamuz, who had brought them with him. Here it is loudly protested, that such a crime is almost unknown; and I must say in favour of this neighbourhood, that horses are here left out unwatched at night, which was never done at Semez.

Shamuz is at all events a faithful, ardent patriot, and a brave, active warrior; whether it be bigotry and suspicion, or wilfulness, vindictiveness, and greed,

* Subsequently it was found that this was not the case.

with which his general character must be qualified, I really cannot yet say. As regards, however, the two former items, it ought to be stated, that Shamuz betrayed symptoms of them four years ago, on the occasion of Daûd Bey's visit at Semez, when, after remarking on the blond complexion of the latter—"exactly like that of the Moscov"—he differed from his countrymen about the propriety of entrusting him with an address to the King of England, and left the congress in consequence of his advice not having been agreed with.

The vine country begins effectively at Waïa, and extends thence all along the coast to the south; but it is limited to the neighbourhood of the coast. I have no doubt, however, that it might be advantageously propagated along the coast northward, and on the valleys toward the Kûban, as it has been successfully introduced by the Russians beyond that river. The people in cultivating the ground hereabouts, have frequently found ancient earthen jars of wine; but they have never ventured to taste the contents.

I find a tradition here regarding the ancient fortress of Sûkûkh, similar to that which prevailed with regard to the ancient tomb of Semez; viz., that upon some persons attempting to dig for treasure supposed to be buried under the "keep," they were affrighted with unearthly sounds, a sally of serpents, &c. How natural to us appears to be a love of the marvellous!

Sûtsha, 16th.—I find the Circassian name of this valley (or river district) to be Sashe, and that it is

called Sûtsha by the Turks only. The Circassian name of Mamaï also is Psekha; of Sûbesh, Shakhe; of one of the streams of Khissa, Bû; and of Vardan, Leûp. It is only by slow degrees one can arrive at anything like accuracy in these respects, especially in my circumstances; for I found, when it was too late, that the casual endeavours I made had become one of the foundations for Shamuz' charges against me.

The distinction in name between the people inhabiting the vicinity of three or four streams in this neighbourhood, and those whose northern boundary is a little to the south—is Abaza and Azra. The dialect of the latter seems to be generally understood here, as well as that of the Adighes (or Circassians) of Notwhatsh, Shapsuk, and Abazak: and one or other of the three totally different languages of these people is made use of as a congress happens to be constituted of members from the southward or northward; for the confederation of this part of the coast extends from the pass of Ghagra (latterly from even beyond that) to Toapse*.

Word has arrived from an Azra prince, (whom the Russians have degraded with the title of general,) that the invading army had already arrived at Sûkûm kaleh, and will embark immediately after the Russian Easter; and that, as its destination must

* The three races just mentioned (specimens of whose languages will be found in the Appendix) are now much mingled together—especially on their frontiers—both as regards their places of residence and their fraternities. Their former location, however, appears to have been as follows:—Azras from the Mingrelian frontier to the stream Hamish: Abazas from the Hamish to the Leûp (or Vardan), and Adighes, thence to the Kûban.

be Sûtsha, Mamaï, or Khissa, his countrymen should withdraw their effects, and be otherwise prepared. He adds, that he has been called upon to furnish auxiliaries, and deplores the necessity he shall be under of doing so; because he is in the power of the Russians.

The Russians, in again turning the arms of the people against each other, seem desirous that the entire nature of subjugation to the emperor should not be forgotten. It is to be hoped it may not, and that it may nerve the people of this portion of the coast, still free, to prefer death to such fratricidal slavery.

Those of this neighbourhood (I have been told by several Turks) are exceedingly honest and trustworthy, no mischief to a merchant or his goods having happened in their recollections. I have ascertained that it really was the case that hostages have been taken from the chiefs between this and Ghagra, to ensure their continued resistance to the Russians, although I cannot hear of their having given any cause for suspicion.

I was sorry to hear from Nadir Bey some months since, that Hassan Bey, when they met at Waïa, had spoken of having been to Sûkûm-kaleh, and seen Baron Rosen, of whose friendship he even seemed then to boast. I thought at the time it must be some other folly—not treachery—the Bey had been guilty of; and such I find it. He had the sanction of the chiefs to go on that errand, in which some of them accompanied him, in the hope that the permission of the baron might be obtained for the

ships of Hassan (who considered himself a Turkish subject) to pass the Russian cruisers, and carry on his trade! The baron must have been highly amused at their simplicity; and, Russian-like, he turned it to account; for Hassan returned fully persuaded that he had accomplished his object, and sent his poor captain to sea, who, assured that he needed no longer fear the cruisers, came within reach of their guns, and was captured, together with his crew and passengers!

17*th.*—Yesterday and to-day, congresses of the chief persons of this neighbourhood have been held on Daûd Bey's letter; but to-day was the principal meeting, as Ali Achmet Bey was in attendance, besides several mollahs and other chiefs. It was urged by way of excuse for not collecting a greater assembly, that all are in imminent danger from the threatened attack of the Russians, which renders it necessary for them to remove their families and effects to a greater distance from the coast, and to complete its fortifications as speedily as possible. The congress was held on a green, and messengers passed between it and my house. The first message was to express admiration at the address, and to reply to it, that union and the appointment of some species of government were certainly most requisite, and that if the people could have accomplished these things themselves, there would have been no need for their seeking external aid; but, that in the present position of affairs, it was beyond their power to attempt any change, and, that there was reason, moreover, to believe, that any chief elected from among themselves would

not obtain sufficient respect and authority. "One must be sent us," they said, "either from England or Turkey, and then everything he orders will be cheerfully performed." The next message was for the purpose of obtaining precise information as to what might at present be expected from England; to which I explained, that the coast was considered as not appertaining to Russia, and consequently open to British commerce, which it was the present aim and intention of their friends in England to commence as soon as possible, the ships I had spoken of as likely to arrive at present being the first essay; and all that I was as yet enabled to assure them of was, that if another English vessel were taken by the Russians elsewhere than in the bay of Sûgûljak (and even the question as to that locality, I told them, I believed still undecided), the Government of England would interfere to demand restitution; the effect of which would be, to throw the trade entirely open. To this it was replied, that this prospect was all they wished in the mean while; for if they could only be supplied with salt and the other necessaries they require from abroad, I might assure Daûd Bey and my countrymen, that they would never become subjects of Russia; "for," continued they, "as his letter truly says, we have abundance of mountains, and to these we will retire in the mean while and defend ourselves, if we be unable to retain possession of the coast; but if the Russians succeed in what it is said they are determined to effect — the erection of forts at all the chief places to which the Turkish vessels now resort —and if English vessels do not arrive in the course

of this or the following year, our situation will become truly deplorable."

I next received the strongest assurances that British commerce on all that portion of the coast for which they could be answerable; viz. from Arduwhatsh to Shakhe *, should receive the same encouragement as that of Turkish merchants, who had never received here any cause of complaint (to the truth of this some Turks present again assented); and as to my ships, they promised, that for some time at least no import duty should be charged; that the captain and sailors should be supplied with all they might want, and be treated with the greatest kindness; and as to the cargoes, not only should every one here exert himself to the utmost to get them disposed of—the ships reloaded and despatched with the greatest alacrity—but my goods should be bought dearer and theirs sold cheaper than usual, as some reward for my great sacrifices and exertions in behalf of their country. "And as our last words," it was added, "be assured that if this trade be once established, we will never make terms with the Russians, but will continue to struggle with them so long as any of us remain in existence."

The congress having then risen, Ali Achmet Bey, Ali-bí of Arduwhatsh, a very intelligent and lively person, and other leading individuals, came to bid me farewell, when as *my* parting words I begged them by no means to despond, for although much time had

* The confederation, as I have shown, extends much further both ways; but these individuals, it may be presumed, wished to bring the British trade to their own neighbourhood, which, however, is the most important.

been consumed in the advocacy of their cause abroad, I had good reason to believe their affairs to be in a better position than ever, and what they had now chiefly to do was to retain that position, by resisting the Russians to the best of their power, but above all by punishing severely all spies and traitors.

In accordance with these recommendations I was then told that the chiefs were obliged to depart, as they were engaged in having the coast fortified, and they were about to proceed to the trial of four individuals on the coast to the southward, who had been detected holding some communication with the enemy.

Previously to these general matters being discussed, it having been stated to the assembly that in consequence of the division of Nadir Bey's powder among the people at Waïa, against his will, I wanted to have some security against such spoliation of any goods I might land here; it was replied that at that portion of the coast there are some bad subjects who must be punished, but that in Nadir Bey's case the blame lay with his companion Zazi-okû Mehmet, who had stated that the powder was sent for division among the people, by the Sultan, who gave Nadir Bey money to purchase it with! Of this statement having been made by Mehmet, Hassan Bey (who then acted as interpreter for the Azran tongue) solemnly assured me (and others thus attest), and that it was the sole cause of the division. The meeting was then told that I nominated Hassan Bey as my konak here, and agent in whatever I might require aid, when a general attestation was given as to the

entire reliance that might be placed upon his integrity and knowledge; and, for further assurance, four of the principal persons present struck hands with him as public evidence of their becoming bound to give him any requisite aid in protecting my property.

Here I have been most hospitably entertained by a Turkish merchant, whose family also has been long resident here, and whose blood I think must, from the peculiarities of his form and character, have a large admixture of that of Circassia: his bearing is that of a Murat, as if he were born to head a charge of cavalry. Oh! that despots could see how they spoil the work of Nature.

END OF VOL. I.

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MAP
to illustrate
NARRATIVE OF A RESIDENCE IN
CIRCASSIA.
by
James Stanislaus Bell Esqr
1840.
Sea of Azoff
Gulf of Kuban
CABARDAH
KABARTOUAI
MITZEGUIA
OR
TSHETSHENSES
LESGHIS
GEORGIA
CASPIAN SEA

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